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Femme Fatales



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CRUSADE

THE "BABYLON 5" SPIN-OFF EXPLODES BEFORE TAKE-OFF.

BY FRANK GARCIA

The time is ripe for sci-fi fans to rally support for a rescue mission. It seems **CRUSADE**, a **BABYLON 5** spin-off, is already doomed to extinction even before the viewing public sampled the TV series. Last spring, the TNT network cancelled **CRUSADE** halfway through its 22 episode mandate. If ratings are good for the wrapped 13 episodes, there may be an order for a second season; however, prospects appear to be dim.

Refusing to discuss the rationale behind the cancellation, series producer John Copeland would only disclose, "[TNT] had the right, at the end of the 13 episodes

to say, 'We don't want to do any more.' I'm not going to get into those events or talk about that."

Copeland does acknowledge, however, that the timing of the cancellation is unusual. "It's odd that we are here in this situation with a show that has not been on the air yet, and doesn't have the judgment of an audience behind it."

Filming was initially launched during September 1998; but midstream into production, a three-week hiatus to upgrade sets and costumes brought the cameras to a screeching halt. After the refurbishments had been installed, cast and crew resumed shooting at the end of October. But in the middle of February, TNT announced its abrupt abandonment of the series.

The series once again slipped into an enforced hiatus while Warner Bros. Television, owners of **CRUSADE**, and Babylonian Productions, the series' creator, shopped the property around to another distributor. "The Sci-Fi Channel was a very obvious choice," explains Copeland, "and they expressed a very strong interest in the show." However, after approximately two weeks of intense negotiations, the Sci-Fi Channel declined to purchase the show; the network preferred investing in



CRUSADE Carmen Otero as resourceful character Quercia Halsey, an alien intel & last of her species, who was introduced in the B5 movie, **A CALL TO ARMS**.

a series that it co-owned (**CRUSADE** and **B5** are entirely the property of Warner Bros.).

"But the Sci-Fi Channel was not the only option," says Copeland. "The business of entertainment is driven by budgets." So why hasn't there been a slam-pede of distributors, eager to pick-up the series? "[It's difficult] for anyone to pick up a show at this point, where their capital expenditure budgets for the year have been spoken for," notes Copeland. "They earmark

funds for certain activities and, all of a sudden, they have [**CRUSADE**] coming out of left field. And they have to see where the money comes from."

The series' hardware and sets have been locked into storage. The cast and crew were released from their contracts, free to pursue other projects. So does this spell a certain demise for **CRUSADE**? "After the show has been aired this summer, if the ratings are there—if viewers tune in and stick

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Morgan Harkin (P5 4.5 & 7.6) was cast as the **CRUSADE**'s science and medical officer, Dr. Susan Chambers

F A T A L E

BY LAURA SCHIFF

Imagine you're a student filmmaker. You and two acquaintances take a road trip one weekend to a rustic town in the American north-east for the purpose of filming a documentary about a local "witch" legend. After interviewing the natives about the myth's genesis, you and your crew set out on a two-hour hike through a remote forest. You're checking out a cemetery that's rumored to be haunted, but you'll never arrive at your destination. Through your own inexperience and the stupidity of your companions, you're lost in the thick, isolated forest. Really lost. The kind of lost that turns up on the six o'clock evening news and reminds us that this sort of thing happens every day, even in America. It's cold and raining. You're hungry. Tired. Fighting amongst yourselves. Alas! you'll starve to death in the elements. And someone, some thing, is hunting you. This is just the first act of **THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT**, the most talked-about movie of the year's Sundance Film Festival. Produced by Florida-based Hoosier Films and purchased for \$1 million by Artime Entertainment, **BLAIR WITCH** is destined to become a classic horror film. This is a movie that will endure (and is likely to be dissected and discussed in the classrooms of American universities). It is, quite succinctly, one of the most terrifying films ever made. How scary is it? I couldn't sleep without a nightlight. And I was still too afraid to shut my eyes before daybreak. Shot on 16mm and digital video, the story unfolds through the subjective eye of the camera lens. You feel as if you're right there in the action—lost in the forest, and gasping for breath as you run for your life. Right from the beginning, this film sucks you in. The fear is unrelenting, building to a conclusion that is as shocking as it is inevitable. The real terror lies in what you don't see, the horrifying pictures your mind renders to fill in the blanks. **THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT** was written and directed by Dan Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez, and produced by Gregg Hale and Robin Cowie. It stars Heather Donahue as the young documentarist and Michael Williams and Joshua Leonard as her technical crew. The film opens nationwide this summer, and I don't think the word of cinema will ever be the same again.



Jessica: Tilly (left, 7.5), posing with her green, in **THE BRIDE OF CHUCKY**; her performance earned the actress a Saturn nomination. Tilly recalls, "Between scenes, Chucky groped my breasts! He's like a lot of film stars I worked with!"

Screen the movie first, and then log into www.fox.com to read about the behind-the-scenes chronicle. And don't say I didn't warn you.

■ **The Academy of Science-Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films** has announced the Best Actress nominees for the 25th annual Saturn awards. The ladies in waiting are: Gillian Anderson (**THE X-FILES: FIGHT THE FUTURE**), Drew Barrymore (**EVER AFTER**), Jamie Lee Curtis (**HALLOWEEN H20**), Meg Ryan (**CITY OF ANGELS**), Jennifer Tilly (**BRIDE OF CHUCKY**), and Catherine Zeta-Jones (**THE MASK OF ZORRO**). Nominees for Best Supporting Actress include: Joan Allen (**PLEASANTVILLE**), Claire Forlani (**MEET JOE BLACK**), Anne Heche (**PSYCHO**), Angelica Huston (**EVER AFTER**), Charlize Theron (**MIGHTY JOE YOUNG**), and Sheryl Lee (**JOHN CARPENTER'S VAMPIRES**). We'll announce the winners in an upcoming issue.

■ Here's a juicy morsel, plucked fresh off the Hollywood grapevine. Rumor is the new James Bond film, **THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH**, will be peppered with scenes from former Bond Gals. On the guest list: Miss Adams (**OCTOPUSSY**), Ursula Andress (**DR. NO**), Barbara Bach (**THE SPY WHO LOVED ME**), Honor Blackman and Shirley Eaton (**GOLDFINGER**), Maryam D'Abo (**THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS**), Rita Eddies (**THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN**), Fanny Jensen and Isabella Scroggie (**GOLDEN EYE**), Tanya Roberts (**VIEW TO A KILL**), Jane Seymour (**LIVE AND LET DIE**), Taffin Sore and Carey Lowell (**LICENSE TO KILL**), and Jill St. John (**DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER**). Michelle Yeoh, who co-

starred in last year's **TOMORROW NEVER DIES**, is apparently RSVPing with her regrets. The 007 veterans will join Bond cooks, Denise Richards (**STARSHIP TROOPERS**), Sophie Marceau (**BRAVEHEART**) and Denise Van Outen (**THE BIG BREAKFAST**). Abridged plot: this time around, the secret agent guards an oil baron's voluptuous daughter.

■ Drew Barrymore will produce a **CHARLIE'S ANGELS** spin-off for Columbia. She'll also star in the feature-length film. Originally, the project was rumored to star Jerry McCarthy, Jada Pinkett and Michelle Yeoh. More details as they become available.

■ Kim Basinger, who won an Oscar last year for playing a Venetian Lake clone in **LA CONFIDENTIAL**, will star in Paramount Pictures' **BLESS THE CHILD**. Based upon a novel by Cathy Cash Spelman, the thriller is described as something of a **ROSEMARY'S BABY** appendage. It centers on three generations of women who fulfill a biblical prophecy, unleashing a battle between good and evil. Basinger's last genre pic? She voiced bombshell Holly Wood in the animated **COOL WORLD** (1992).

■ Oscar-winning writer of **LA CONFIDENTIAL**, Brian Koppelman—who made his directorial debut, earlier this year, with the profitable **PAYBACK**—is gearing up to helm **THE SIN EATER**, a theological thriller for 20th Century-Fox. Koppelman challenges the Christian notions of good and evil with the eternal question: Is it a sin to kill an evil man? Casting is underway for the role of Lucy Sinclair, a cop who tried to kill herself after a particularly brutal murder case a few years earlier. Now, Lucy's tempestuous hold on sanity is put to the test as she investigates a bizarre new crime. A French ambassador has been found dead with Armand's letters carved into his skin. When fingerprints from the murder scene match those found at the scene of a 1916 Brooklyn murder, Lucy starts to suspect she's dealing with the supernatural. **THE SIN EATER** is supposed to be along the same lines as **THE EXORCIST** and—you guessed it—**ROSEMARY'S BABY**. Antonio Banderas is rumored to be involved in talks to play the title character, William Eden. No word yet on who might play Lucy.

■ It seems Paramount and producer Scott Ruben (**GLEOPATRA'S SECOND HUSBAND**) are planning

to remake 1975's horrific polemic, **THE STEPFORD WIVES**, which was written by novelist Ira Levin who also penned—are we on a roll, here?—*Rosemary's Baby*. The studio is looking to hire a high-profile writer to pen the remake, which will reportedly be similar in tone to **THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK**. The original adaptation starred Katherine Ross and Paula Patton as friends who discover that the husbands in Stepford, CT are secretly replacing their wives with docile robotic. So far, no word on who will play the Stepford spouses in the remake.

●Neva Campbell will reprise her role as Sidney Prescott in **SCREAM 3**, due for a December 10th release. Also returning: Courtney Cox as TV reporter Gale Weathers and her real-life love, David Arquette, as Dewey Riley. The installment finds Sidney working in Hollywood as a young actress on a cheesy B-movie horror flick. Kevin Williamson will again script the film, with Wes Craven returning to direct. Cameras roll this summer.

●Destination Films' **THE BOX**, targeted for a summer 2000 release, is a modern retelling of the Pandora myth. The script, purchased on spec from writer Jeffrey Miker, centers on 17-year-old Jason, who's intrigued by sexy new neighbor Dana. Jason is pursued by a couple of countryside G-men who claim Dana possesses a piece of stolen government property. Pestered to break into Dana's house, Jason retrieves the item. But curiosity gets the better of our boy: he opens the box, extricating evil demons that he must return to captivity. Destination president Steve Stalder informed industry sources he expects the film to be budgeted in the \$40 million range.

●Universal Studios has signed the writing-directing team of Deborah Kaplan and Harry Elfont (**CANT HARDLY WAIT**) to write and direct a live-action **JOSIE AND THE PUSSYCATS** film. Based on the Archie comics' series, the film is described as "CLUELESS meets **MEN IN BLACK**," about as all-girl rock band who saves the world.

●Take Gillian Anderson home with you—on Fox Home Entertainment's **FUTURE FANTASTIC**. The smart & sexy star of **X-FILES** has loaned her voice to this documentary, which hazards a guess as to what our world might look like in years to come. Breakthrough in cyborgs, genetic engineering, virtual reality and transforming are discussed, as well as extraterrestrial life and the nature of immortality. Suggested retail price: \$29.99.

X-FILES creator Chris Carter



The premed dish of eccentricals is peeled, spiced & steamed in an '80s sci-fi pulp classic, *Taisha O'Connell* photographed 1 month ago (5) by Linda Finkelstein—is equally tasty in **ASHES TO ASHES**, a scary thriller that's debut this year.

has finalized casting for the pilot episode of his new sci-fi series **HARSH REALMS**. Samantha Mathis (**AMERICAN PSYCHO**), Broken Arrow), Nathel Hayward (**VOYAGE OF TERROR**) and Sarah-Jane Redmond (**DISTURBING BEHAVIOR**) round out a mostly new cast. The plot: Virtual reality has enabled people to create "pocket universes" where they can be anyone they wish to be. Private investigator Dexter Groes (Nicholas Lea) is exposed to this world when he is hired to find a missing teenager and discovers a conspiracy involving the man who created the technology. Scott Bairstow (**PARTY OF FIVE**) will play the lead, a soldier named Hobbes who is sent into a computer program used by the military to simulate wars. D.J. Sweeney will play Mike, another soldier who lives in a virtual reality underground. Terry O'Quinn plays the man they're supposed to kill, the supposedly evil leader who created a violent society within the computer program simulation. Both Hayward and Redmond have made

guest appearances on Chris Carter's **MILLENNIUM**. **HARSH REALMS** premieres on Fox this fall.

●Our readers can't get enough of Taisha O'Connell, better known as technical officer Denaia, the breakfast of 10-ft maggots in Roger Corman's **GALAXY OF TERROR** (1981). The address reports her **SCI-FI FILES**, a proposed TV series formerly described as "a 20/20 of the supernatural," has been revamped into "BEEGIE & TWIGG: PARANORMAL PRIVATE EYES." It's like a combination of **BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD**, **THE OUTER LIMITS** and **20/20**. **SCI-FI FILES** was just a little too dry for people. We shopped it around and there was interest, but it wasn't trendy enough. **BEEGIE & TWIGG** is live-action, with a cartoon strip set up around it. It's more fun and hip, delivery for a younger demographic. O'Connell plays Twigg, a "very dominant blonde." Her partner Beegie ("a red-headed, over-the-top guy who gets into everything") is still being cast. Their slogan: "It's Out There, We've Seen It!" O'Con-

nell also tells me that her latest horror movie, **ASHES TO ASHES**, is still moving forward, though director Jon Stouff has ordered a moratorium on discussing the project with the press until production is completed. "I play the aunt of a little boy who inherits a graveyard," says O'Connell. "All I can tell you is I turn out to be not what anyone thought."

●Recently caught up with new mother Tara McClure (84), who shed some light on the delayed release of **THANCE**, the mobsters-and-magicians indie that she produced two years ago. "We just did a re-edit on that and, hopefully, it'll come out at some point," McClure says. "My hands are tied because J.L. Media has been slow on finishing the film. Things are moving forward, just not as quick as I would have liked. But, hey, I'm working so I can't complain!" So how does she appraise her latest gig as a recurrent presence on Showtime's **INTIMATE STRANGERS**? "I love working with the people on the TV screen," she says with headshot "Toby Spence, the director, is fabulous. Sometimes some of the actors are really good and it's inspiring to me, and, unfortunately, some of the actors are real weak and it's not as much fun. I love working and I just want to be challenged." To this end, McClure is really pushing for a part in daytime drama. "I just want a chance to do some good quality work. It can be about sex or whatever, as long as the characters are challenging. That's all I'm looking for."

●8-Queen Julie Strain and gal pal Devin DeVaquez (**GUIN, SOCIETY**) are determined to conquer the web with **POTLUCK**, the first stop on the information superhighway. Says DeVaquez, "I'm putting a sitcom that I wrote onto the Internet. Julie and I are trying to do something that hasn't been done before. I'm taking the premise of a script, really just a loose outline, and I'm shooting real-life drama that's going on in my life and Julie's life and our friends' lives. Kind of like MTV's **THE REAL WORLD**. We're shooting real-life girl problems. It's about relationships, our love lives. I think every girl can relate to that, and every guy wants to know. It's like sitting in on a pajama party! The Internet is a better place for this material than on network television, and if we cause a buzz in some of the Internet magazines, then who knows what can happen? Instead of going about things the hard way in Hollywood—letting someone option your script and waiting two or three years to see if they can get a star attached and get it on the air—I thought I'd take a different ap-



proach and put it on the Internet. We've been experimenting with it, shooting some test footage, and it's looking pretty incredible. I think fans are gonna love it." DeVosquez says the footage is shot with a digital camera and can be viewed with RealVideo technology. Look for a debut, perhaps as early as this summer, at www.pothook.com.

• Elvira's large format 3-D film, **ENCOUNTERS IN THE THIRD DIMENSION**, moves into wide release in July. Look for the Mistress of the Dark at Imax Theatres all across America, Canada, Japan, Australia and Europe. In the film, Elvira performs the song *Haunted House*, the first-ever Imax 3-D music video. According to Elvira's husband/manager Mark Pearson, "Imax spent over \$3 million for the three-minute video alone. It's just amazing." The song, featured on the CD entitled *Elvira Presents Revenge of the Monster Hits*, is in current release on Rhino Records and popping up on the play lists of radio stations everywhere. **ENCOUNTERS** is expected to haunt Imax Theatres well into the witching season.

• Chatted with Roxanne Michaels, who recently took a break from "the usual T&A and overly gratuitous porn" to play a mother in director Donald Farmer's **SPACE KID**. "I play an alien mother in the opening segment," she says. "It's very similar to **SUPERMAN**. There's a confrontation with a soldier, played by my real-life boyfriend Joseph Anthony, who's a Chippendale model. I get shot, and I see my child to safety on a space-

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Actress RP starlet Roxanne Michaels photographed by Duane Polanco, 6, defects alienage in **SPACE KID** (p. 40).



AUSTIN POWERS

THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME

DIRECTOR JAY ROACH DISCUSSES HIS SEQUEL TO THE '97 SLEEPER:
A COMBO OF '60s SMOKE SCREEN AND '90S FEMMES FATALES.

BY DOUGLAS EBY

Returning a second time as director to *Austin Powers*'s retro-cool world was a pleasure for Jay Roach. "It was a very welcome thing," he affirms. "I, fortunately, got offered a lot of projects after doing the first [AUSTIN POWERS], but it was an easy choice to say, 'No, I really want to do the sequel, AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME.' Mike [Myers] and I have such a great time getting together, and we had so much more confidence going into the second one than we did in the first one. We believed in the first one but, by the time we got to start the second one, we said, 'Wow, we have something and people seem to get it and like it—so let's take it even further.'" Roach and Myers, along with co-writer Michael McCullers, had connected early on to develop the characters, i.e. Austin "Danger" Powers, Dr. Evil, et al. "We hashed out opportunities



AUSTIN POWERS sequel: the secret agent (Mike Myers) is matched with Felicity Shagwell (Heather Graham, FF 7-1). "It doesn't come off as a parody film."

and possibilities for a long time," Roach recalls. "That was very gratifying, and the characters grew out of that. But it's Mike's script and Mike's vision. He is an amazing guy."

Tallying credits on a variety of films as producer, cinematographer and scribe, Roach says he's insistent on landing further gigs as a director. "I sort of developed my experience to have abilities in a lot of different areas so that, when I showed up as director, I would know what each department was working on, how they would achieve what I wanted; how they would solve the problems I threw at them and I've found that that worked. Because I had been everything from a grip to a writer, I was able to communicate better on the set and also in preproduction and in postproduction. I had done a little editing and sound mixing. I had done a little of everything—a jack of all trades, and master of none, and hopefully that works in to ultimately becoming a master director. I don't con-



"Powerful package" Heather Graham (LOST IN SPACE) as AUSTIN it's siren of the '60s. "Graham is so free-spirited, you don't instantly notice how smart she is."

sider myself there yet, but I'm going to keep working on it." His next project, that he's actively developing, is likely to be THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY.

Roach credits the writers of HITCHHIKER'S, and AUSTIN POWERS for his creative inspiration. "When you're around people with minds like Mike Myers and Douglas Adams, you do start to believe there is an elite class of brain that not all of us get. You just want to be around it as much as you can and as often as you can. And if you just set as a goal to create the perfect atmosphere, within which the sparks can fly from these funny, good minds, then all you have to do is have the camera in the right place and a lot of film."

As far as some of the specifics of AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME, Roach confirms that Eliz-

abeth Hurley comes back in a cameo as Vanessa Kensington. "It isn't a lot of time, but she returns for a really great opening sequence," he says. "I can't reveal the outcome of what it is but it's hysterical, and a great transition into this sequel." Another cameo, he notes, is performed by Tim Robbins as the President of the United States, "who is, of course,

being threatened by Dr. Evil and blackmailed in some grand, diabolical plot." One of the key characters is Heather Graham as Felicity Shagwell. "Graham was amazing," Roach enthuses, "she really just became a character unlike any that I've ever seen her play. I've seen almost all of her work and I've always been a fan, and she was my absolute

first choice for the part. She has such a great mixture of a sort of '60s playfulness and seemingly carefree attitude, and it's mixed with an underlying intelligence which kind of sneaks up on you. She's very, very smart. But she's so beautiful and so funny and free-spirited that you don't instantly notice how smart she is... and then when you do, you say, 'Oh my God, this is a very powerful package.'"

Graham's character, a self-professed Austin Powers fan, has "studied his techniques and his skill and modes operandi as a spy, and has kind of embraced them in herself," Roach says. "She's an American version of that, and drives a beautiful 1967 Corvette that's painted in an American flag, the way Austin's Jag was painted with the Union Jack. And she has some of his mannerisms and some of his sexual mores, shall we say, and

Elizabeth Hurley & Mike Myers in AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY. Hurley boldly reprises her "Vanessa Kensington" role in the SHAGGED sequel.





Myers and Graham evoke spies and thigs, '80s-style. The director lauded the actress' "eagerness and earnestness. She was my absolute first choice for the role."

prides herself on having modeled herself after him; and then the great twist is he shows up and they seem like the perfect couple but, in this case, he's lost his mojo—as we say—and he is kind of not even as 'Austin' as he is, to begin with. Graham loved that idea, and it kind of matched her own feelings for the character and for Mike Myers. She really loved the character of Austin Powers, and wanted a chance to try to fit into that world. That's the kind of eagerness and earnestness with which she played the part. So the offscreen reality matched the onscreen character, so it worked out beautifully."

One of the characters introduced in the sequel, played by Kristen Johnston as **THIRD ROCK FROM THE SUN**, adds to the story's capriciousness. "Ivana Humpalot is a great new invention," grins Roach, "and Kristen

allowed us to completely transform her into Ivana. In fact, it was her idea and she has a very different look than what she has in her television world. I hope people recognize her, I mean she's such a great actress—and it's going to work whether they do or not, but I hope people also get the joy of knowing that it's her. She plays a Russian spy who's in a scene with Rebecca

Romijn, the supermodel, and together they are subjects for an *Austin Powers* photo session. And then they have a 'THOMAS CROWN AFFAIR' chess game and it is so funny, it turned out so much funnier than we expected. The script was really funny but Mike and Kristen started improving together, and they were a riot. It's like watching great tennis play-

ers: it just goes back and forth and you realize they're pushing each other, and drawing each other into a place of total freedom and creativity. It was really fun to watch."

Growing up a fan of the 007 films, Roach also appreciated the imitations "that didn't take themselves quite so seriously but were certainly inspired by Bond, OUR MAN FLINT, the Matt

Helm movies and a few European versions of the spy genre. There was a film called **DANGER, DIABOLIK** [1967], which is more of a super-thief kind of thing but there's espionage and spying in it, and it's very stylized and colorful. And there's an even more stylized film called **THE TENTH VICTIM** [1966] with Marcello Mastroianni and Urvashi Andress, which we studied because we wanted to find a way to not so much spoof a genre as embrace the best parts of it, and

Myers and Graham swing on Carnaby Street. "We brought to this the superficial, kind of stylized, musical aspects of the '60s. Certainly not an honest representation of it."



then put a twist from Mike's unique persona. To do that, we were almost like these DJ mixmaster guys looking to sample the most interesting parts of a lot of different things, and combine our own flavors with them to create something entirely different. I'm happy that it doesn't come off as a parody film. It seems to me to be much more embracing of a character, and also unashamedly borrowing from so many great parents, if you will. That's a mixed metaphor, but there is a genetic structure that we owe to so many previous films. But it is also its own unique individual."

Although growing up in New Mexico, Roach vividly recalls a six-month period during 1967: "My parents and I drove through the Haight-Ashbury district a couple of times. My parents, who were relatively conservative and Southern, were kind of horror-struck by it. But we kids in the back seat of the station wagon were just fascinated. Our faces were pressed against the windows and soaking it up like we were Allen in *Wonderland*. And I'll never forget seeing it that way, kind of the 'theme park tour' of it. Certainly we didn't know anything about drugs and dangerous sex and anything like that, and that's kind of the fuzzy memory—the filter—through which Austin Powers is presented. We brought to this the superficial, kind of stylized, joyous and musical aspects of the '60s; certainly not an honest representation of it. But we tried to embrace the best parts of it: the emphasis on love and dancing, music and color and freedom—all the things that were the silver lining in the whole era."

The primary influence for the films, specifically the character of Austin, started with Mike Myers listening to Burt Bacharach records. "That's really what it comes from," nods Roach, "the music that Mike loves, and Mike is a musician. He performed in the first movie.

JAY ROACH, DIRECTOR

"Elizabeth Hurley returns for a hysterical transition into this sequel. Heather Graham is so smart and funny. Her character has some of Austin's mannerisms and his sexual mores."



Myers & Graham in a not-so-variable hotel on the "Buckingham Palace quest" gap. "We'd start rehearsing and everyone in the cast started to spin off ideas."

He's also such a big fan of pop culture, and that particular era has value for him." Roach concurs with a report that Myers is also a fan—even an "addict"—of *The History Channel*: "Yes, in fact that's something he and I had in common when we first met. I was not so much from the world of comedy, and had done a lot of research for a project about World War II and Mike is a self-taught expert on that aspect of history. So we would sit and talk about that, and my project. It was a funny way for us to get together, and then for that to inspire him to hire me to direct the first *AUSTIN POWERS* was a pretty funny idea."

Another actor reprising his role from that first film is Seth Green as Scott Evil. "Seth is amazing, and we were so lucky to get him back," says Roach. "I mean, he's become a big star since we got to work with him [Green's post-*AUSTIN POWERS* credits include *CAN'T HARDLY WAIT*, *IDLE HANDS* and *ENEMY OF THE STATE*]. He was

certainly known before, but now his star has definitely risen. One of the best parts of doing this series is that he is, again, another great improv actor. For me, directing any movie is all about casting, working with the cast and getting them to feel confident and comfortable and spontaneous. I am very focused on casting as about 80 or 90 percent of the preproduction process, and I just insist on surrounding myself with actors who are not only good, inspired and technically capable, but are completely comfortable with getting off the script. They have to be prepared to do what's scripted but then to be ready to run with Mike because once he takes off, a lesser actor would be left in the dust if they were just stuck in the script. So you can't come in with just preconceptions and just stick with that. You have to be able to jump to something far better and it happens almost every day on our sets, where I show up with storyboards, and Mike shows up with some-

thing in mind and the other cast members show up with something. Then when we start rehearsing, we say, 'Oh, this is much better—this is all good, let's keep all that, but this over here could be much better, let's perform this other thing differently.' Everyone in the cast, and Seth is one of the best, will rise to that and start spinning off ideas."

Contrasting the new film with the earlier one, Roach says, "THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME, was different in one important way. The script had more time to evolve, and because Mike was even more confident with the character—and Michael McCullers was now co-writing with him—they got to work a fair amount of time on it. On the first one, we put a lot of it together as we were in preproduction; but on this one, they had a really tight script to begin with, which was great. The more preparation you have in any of this, the more you can improvise off of that. If you're always struggling just to make it make sense, you are always conservative. But if it already makes sense, then you can step off of what's predictable and try other, wilder things." □

Jay Roach helmed both of the *AUSTIN POWERS* films. "The sparks can fly from these funny, good minds."



EVELYNE KRAFT MIGHTY PEKING MAN

QUENTIN TARANTINO IS REISSUING HER CAMPY "KONG" CLASSIC: RECOLLECTIONS OF A VAMPIRE, A BIG APE & THE FADING BIKINI.

By JIM DOWIE

A phone rings, and I suspect it's something like six hours ahead in some sort of European atoll. But what did I know? It could have been early morning over there. Abruptly, a lady with a pronounced German-English accent blurts "Mokis," which I assume means "Hello."

"May I speak to Evelyn Kraft please?" I snicker. "Former leading lady? MIGHTY PEKING MAN?"

A burst of laughter later, she replies, "Ya, this is Evelyn, that is me speaking. I have changed a bit since that movie. I hope you can understand my Swiss-English." *Love from Switzerland: Evelyn Kraft.* With a cute giggle, she adds, "But I am now Mrs. Matthys. I can't believe you want to talk to me about that movie, that was over 20 years ago."

Well, one of the campy film's aficionados is director/producer Quentin Taran-



Screenlife (Evelyn Kraft) beelines her bosom buddy, MIGHTY PEKING MAN. Kraft: Besides the \$500,000 production on "my little KONG KONG film, I tried to have fun with it."

tino, whose Rolling Thunder Pictures—united with Cowboy Booking International—is reissuing MIGHTY PEKING MAN on big screens as a "Midnight Movie."

But before broaching the elusive movie, I ask Kraft for some info related to her career as an actress. She spins a story that's still in search of a Hollywood ending.

"How did I get started in film?" she asks wistfully. "I

have to go back a long way, because—like the movie, PEKING MAN—my life has so many jungles already. I was born and raised in Zurich, Switzerland. When I was about nine years old, my parents died. I came from quite a well-to-do family but the people are more after my money than helping me, this helpless child. Lawyers want to get the meat out of me. The only thing in my life that is good

are my animals. I had a horse and I trained dogs, which later came in handy in the film. I left a lot of things behind as a child because they all had to be sold. I'd think, 'How can I get out of this mess, this horrible situation?' Getting an elderly person to take care of me and my money until I was 20—it was a lot of very nasty, ugly men."

"I had to run away and get out of there," she softly continues. "I thought about being an airline hostess, but I was too young. Maybe a singer? (Laughs) Don't have the voice. So I think, 'Ya, an actress.' I was the youngest girl ever accepted at the Stage Acting School in Zurich. It was my chance to get away from this horrible mess."

"But I couldn't get money until I was 20 and, because of my name, I got no scholarship. They think I have money. So I must work at night doing stupid jobs like cleaning. Because of the name, people are surprised



Kraft as sexy "jungle girl," Samantha Jones, in the original *HERBIE: A HOT DATE* (1976). The idea of the movie is nice, a bit of jungle funk, Texan and KING KONG. The best actors were the animals."

that I do these stupid jobs but I wouldn't give up. I would get through the school without the money."

By the time Kraft turned 20, her contraptions didn't fade away. Drama school doesn't prepare one for the snakes and ladders of the entertainment industry. Aspiring to develop some credibility as a film producer, she prepared to play a plump behind-the-scenes role: "I didn't want to be this blonde, stupid, little actress. I wanted to actually become a producer. So I decided to use my money, [accumulated from my father's insurance policies], and invest in a film—titled *EVIL EYE*—that starred Anita Ekberg. I had always admired her, she was a beautiful blonde; but, unfortunately at that time, she was already drunk and weighed 160 kilos [220 pounds]. So here I come

with money from Switzerland and, of course, that was a big mess. They took all my money. But it was still a learning experience. It was such a stupid movie. But I had an entrance into the film industry as a producer and not as a stupid blonde actress. So maybe that is better."

Kraft pursued a career as an actress. Cast in a string of television shows, she landed recurrent roles in *SUPERBUG* ('73) and *THE MADDEST CAR IN THE WORLD* ('75). Both German films were pale imitations of Disney's *THE LOVE BUG*, a 1969 fantasy about Herbie—a Volkswagen with a mind of its own—which spawned a surfeit of sequels and even a 1982 television series. "Ah, those films are still popular in Germany, now," says Kraft. "Each year, they are still seen on

"I had this skimpy [bikini] on in 1976 in India. All the men just kept staring at me and the Indian ladies kept slapping them. We had to do the scenes over & over."

TV for children. They are similar to those 'Herbie' movies—you know, that crazy German car. I had major parts in them but it was not great acting. And then I did this German film, with a director named Franz-Joseph Gottlieb, called *LADY DRACULA* [1977]. That is also a stupid movie. I acted as a vampire. I was thinking, 'Why? I go and attend a well-known actor's studio, and go to drama school, and now I'm doing this? No more vampire movies. It's not good and I don't like it anymore.'"

Judging from the tone of her voice, Kraft was drifting into melancholy. But flashbacks to *MIGHTY PEKING MAN* ("my little *KING KONG* film") evoke a nostalgic euphoria. Hoping to reprise the success of *LEGEND OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES*—a collaborative production with Hammer films that matched Peter Cushing with Hong Kong superstar David Chiang—the Shaw Brothers sought to exploit Western horror icon, *KING KONG*. Curiously, *PEKING MAN* was being shot during the same time that producer Dino DeLaurentis was

launching his remake of 1933's *KING KONG*. In lieu of Fay Wray or Jessica Lange, Ms. Kraft was hired by the Hong Kong producers to play the object of their smitten ape's affection. As a "jungle girl," Kraft is a literal swinger, optionally juggling or swimming, the top of her tiny, makeshift bikini always seems at risk of sinking below her papilla.

So how did an actress, fed-up with vampires and a grandstanding VW, ever get involved with a "man-in-a-monkey-suit" cheesecake? "I think the Shaw Brothers received pictures from my agent," recalls Kraft. "I didn't even know the pictures were submitted. I learned that all they were looking for was a blonde lady from Europe, and they just hired me from my pictures. They then flew me to Hong Kong, and I met the producer Ron Ran Shaw and his brother and that was that. But to me, I wanted to do it because I had always dreamed of working or going to the jungle, and also because I love animals and I thought this would be great because I knew I'd work with animals. Plus, there was the fascination of the Far East

"What's funny are the scenes with the bike garlie," says Kraft. "When I crouched into his hand, it's just a fur covered platform. I enjoyed working on the movie."



and India. What was tough, though, is that the director didn't speak a word of English so I had to learn some Cantonese—and, eventually, Mandarin—because I ended up travelling back and forth to Hong Kong for the next five years, after I finished shooting **MIGHTY PEKING MAN**."

The film opens as a big ape (formally known as Mighty Peking Man) emerges in the Himalayas in the wake of a violent earthquake and makes its way to the jungles of India (the title notwithstanding, the overseas chimp completely circumvents Peking). A Hong Kong entrepreneur intends to lead an expedition to India. It seems the ape's captivity would insure a profitable exhibition. Johnny Feng (Danny Lee), a young, stiff-upper-lipped explorer, joins a safari that cruises into an uncivilized wilderness. They're promptly fanged, attacked and maimed by some rather hostile tigers, elephants and snakes. One night, everyone does the "foot, do your duty" routine back to China. But a slumbering Johnny doesn't realize that the entourage has made an impromptu oodles. He awakens and is literally picked-up by a huge gorilla who transforms him into surrogate gym equipment. Samantha, an alluring "nature girl," restrains the ape, who's her compatriot, and nurses Johnny back to health in her cave. She also makes love to the Indiana Jones wannabe. Johnny reciprocates by sucking snake poison out of Samantha's inner thigh and indulging in more sex. The pet ape is transported to Hong Kong where it promptly wrecks a bit of havoc and plummets from the roof of a very tall building. The End.

"I really enjoyed working on the film," enthuses Kraft. "And I never worried about working in the jungle amidst all the diseases and

"It's a big surprise people are interested in this film. Maybe because it's so honest & the acting is terrible. But somehow it comes back at you in a good way."



Kraft, third-cited, was pitched on Peking's European posters, and art related to the film's U.S. release (see GOLATHON). "What was tough about the film," recounts Kraft, "is the director didn't speak a word of English."

malaria and real wild animals. We listened to them, they were all around us in the brush. I made some nice friends there. The idea of the movie is nice, a bit of *Jungle Book*, *Torres* and *KING KONG*. To me, the best actors were the animals. The Chinese actors are always exaggerating their stuff, almost as if they are like on stage. As first I thought, 'I can't do this! But I eventually decided that I would try to have fun with it. Besides, I knew I wouldn't be a great actor. So what the heck!—just have fun. What's funny are all the scenes with the fake gorilla;

when I crawl onto its hand, it's just a fur covered platform. We had no problems. The shots with the animals were also okay. Ironically, it was the scenes with the people that were the most difficult. I understood the animals more than the actors. But the director was alright."

More than one year was invested in the film's production. Special effects shots of the ape were developed by the craftsmen who labored in a similar capacity for Toho's *Godzilla* movies (circa 1989, beginning with *GODZILLA VS BIOLANTER*). The director, Ho Meng

Hua (aka Ho Meng), earned some celebrity for his earlier kung-fu films, also produced by the Shaw Brothers. Hua belted some of Hong Kong's pioneering fighting femmes, including Zheng Pei Pei and Shih Tui; the latter actress, who starred in *LEGEND OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN VAMPIRES*, also portrayed an energized clone in *SUPERMAN AGAINST THE ORIENT*, replete with an "S" imprinted on her belt and an aptitude for flying around Hong Kong and kung-fu-kicking bad guys.

(Trivial Pursuit: born in 1923, Hua was raised in Guang Dong, China. He attended the Shanghai Drama Institute and started work as a cinematographer in 1955. Hua joined the Shaw Brothers in 1960 and directed swashbucklers like *THE LADY HERMIT*, *VENGEFUL BEAUTY* and *LADY OF STEEL*. When a truncated version of *PEKING MAN* was released in the U.S. as *GOLATHON* (circa 1979), Hua's director credit was Anglicized into *Homer Gough*; leading man Danny Lee was translated into Les Harrison.)

The film's environment proved compatible with Kraft's fondness for animals. "Whoa, yes," she quips. "They had a bunch of tigers and they were really dangerous. They tried to have everything in a controlled environment on set. They had animal trainers standing by with tranquilizers and what not. It was really fascinating but it was dangerous. One of the tigers clawed me pretty badly. You see, they are drugged, it is even worse: they wake up and they are in pain. The ones that got me, they cut off his claws and sewed up his lips. That made me very upset, because it would whimper a lot and I couldn't take it anymore, and I really wanted to kill those people for doing that I said to them, 'I'd rather take the risk of having the animals chomp on



Top: Kraft rescues Gena Lee Telford's devoted, misunderstood ape. Left: The jungle heroine furries with chestnut Lee's feline. In regard to her seducing bidet too, Kraft notes, "He [Tarzan] would fall off. Things just came out at the scene!"



Kraft in her incredible shrinking bikini: "It was not so embarrassing," giggles Kraft about her involuntary exposure. "But I'd rather have not done that."

me than to hurt it.' But it was done anyway. They all think that I was crazy."

"It is funny, they were all more afraid than I was. We also had this elephant scene that was a bit dangerous because the herd went nuts and they lost control of it. I told them that I was used to working with animals so it wasn't that bad for me. The director was really afraid, he was running left to right and right to left, protecting himself and other people. I think he was more scared than me. I think I wasn't afraid because I believe that animals are more honest than people."

Watching the film closely, you can really tell that it's Kraft playing and roughing it up with the tigers and leopards. There's even a cool shot where she has to climb up a palm tree, knock down some fruit for Johnny, then slide back down. There is no question that Kraft is performing without a body dou-

ble. Getting a grip on phony jungle vines, she even swung from tree to tree.

"Ya, I did all my own stunts in the film," says Kraft. "No stunt double for me. When I did the palm tree climbing, the bark is actually rough and my whole leg is in pain from the climbing and sliding on the tree. My whole legs were covered in black and blue bruises. You know, when you watch those Tarzan films—when they swing from tree to tree on those vines—it looks so easy. Everything is well prepared for doing that, but in this film you just do it. So once when I was swinging on the vine, I swing right into a tree. So with all the three things—the elephants and tiger things—this film was not easy to do."

And how the brevity of her "wardrobe"? Production stills validate that the bikini cups had a proclivity for slipping below Kraft's nip-

ples. Was it all a p.r. stunt or was the actress literally losing it through the production?

A lung winded "OAAAA" later, Kraft evasively dances around the subject. "The scenes in India were terrible. The director always tried to explain to the Indian crowds, for the crowd scenes, that this big ape is coming from a certain direction over a building. Now think, I had this skimpy thing on in 1976 in India. Well, all the men just kept staring at me and the Indian ladies kept slapping them but they just kept on staring. They had to do the scene over and over. I mean there is no way that a lady in India would ever dress like that in public (laughs). It was certainly very funny."

"And ya, ya, sometimes as I'm running around, the costume would indeed fall off. Things just came out at the seams (giggles). I was not so embarrassed, but I'd

rather have not done that. But I thought that, to me when I do this movie, I want to do my best so I tried to do my best, even if I didn't like the way they had me doing my acting. But you know this film cost \$500,000 dollars to make and you can't compare it to that \$40 million film [the aforementioned KING KONG remake] they were doing in New York."

Kraft interjected that she was still bewildered by our interview, not to mention MIGHTY PEKING MAN's enduring appeal and notoriety. When she heard that a New York-based *FF* reporter would be querying her about the movie, the actress assumed some of her friends had conspired to pull an April Fool's Day prank. "Ya, I thought it was a big joke. I mean you are telling me the country that produces the best films in the world wants to talk to me about a gorilla film I did 24 years

ago?

"Apparently the film has two endings. The reason is that they needed a film for India and it is bad luck to fake death in India, so, in that version, I don't die. However, in the European version, I do die. I'm still fascinated by the movie, even though I haven't seen it for a long time. I used to have a cassette of it, somewhere. But you know, I have retired from film when I was 25 or 26, and now I have been married for 18 years and have three children—and that is also a big career for me."

But seven years ago—just as Kraft thought her life was on the mend, with deflecting memories of a depressing childhood and an inconsequential film career—her husband experienced a major financial crisis: his entire communications empire crumbled. He supervised Germany's European Business Channel. Time-Warner decided to pull the plug and that was the beginning of the end. "I had to step in and rescue it," says Kraft, "and I have done it successfully, and I am now a business woman by force. I have my own real estate business, vineyard, a company in Nigeria and I'm doing educational programs for children there and working on a book."

"I want to help the people in Nigeria, help educate the children but leave the culture be. If they could cut 50% of their rules and regulations, it would make life a better place. I love it there and have a big company there. I think it's about going back to that jungle thing in my life and the film. My son is building a soccer stadium there for the children."

It suddenly occurs to me that Samantha and Evelyn are one in the same. Both lost their parents when they were kids and both befriend animals surrogate as their best friends. Paralleling Tarzan, Samantha and her parents—all passengers in an airplane—

"When I met with the Pope last year, he personally thanked me because I had the chance to get the Muslims and Christians together. It was a great event."



7. "The producers hired me from my pictures," says Kraft. "But the character is a lot like me." 8. The ape wastes a city: two endings were shot for the film. "I die in the European print," notes Kraft. "In the India release, I survive."

crashed landed in a jungle. Her family expires and Samantha, the sole survivor, is raised by a giant ape. Four-legged critters become her companions.

"Samantha is a lot like me," Kraft concurs. "I was lost in the jungle as a child...a more sophisticated jungle but it wasn't unlike Samantha's situation and survival. Samantha had the ['King Kong'] ape with her, and that relationship was more honest, where the re-

lationships that I had were not. The ape was peaceful, protective and a tender human being. To me, people are worse than the animals. If you don't have appropriate channels for expression, it leads to violence. The ape was misunderstood, so he had to use his physical power. In reality, no animals are as mean as human beings. My dog is my best friend, he never lets me down."

As we conclude the inter-

view, I ask Kraft if MIGHTY PEKING MAN—revered for its blissful irredeemability—had somehow resorted to real life or on-screen esthetics. "The lesson I drew from it," she immediately replies, "is to leave nature as it is. There are parallels here. The danger of civilization is that we lose our natural instincts and crush them with the troubles we have in everyday life. This instability comes from people just wanting their own self interest. So many parallels in the movie, here! The point is also to help third world countries but leave them as they are—and not tell them what to do. When I met the Pope last year, because we had done the Cathedral for him, he personally thanked me because I had the chance to get the Muslims and Christians together. And it was a great event."



He was very nice and wonderful, it was a great moment."

She jokingly signs-off with, "Call me in five minutes. I'm sure I'll have thought of something else I should have said. But you know, I have to say that this is a big surprise that people are interested in this film. Maybe it's because it's so honest and the acting is terrible, but somehow it comes back at you in a good way. It's amazing." □



Mark Hamill ("Luke Skywalker") & Fish-
er, aboard Jabba's
suzerainty, strike a
musclebuilding pose
for RETURN OF THE
JEDI. "George Lucas
cast us for our per-
sonality and our abil-
ity to clash or not,"
recounts Ms. Fisher.

CARRIE FISHER

STAR WARS BABE

SHE'S SCI-FI'S PIONEERING ICON: FISHER'S REFLECTIONS ON PRINCESS LEIA, GEORGE LUCAS, DRUGS AND WOMEN'S ROLES.

BY LAURA SCHIFF

The first thing I notice when I enter the Beverly Hills home of actor/screenwriter Carrie Fisher is the strong smell of chocolate. Just in case you're among the three or four people on the planet who haven't seen *STAR WARS*, let me set you straight:

Carrie Fisher is the actress who played ball-breaking Princess Leia Organa in George Lucas' intergalactic blockbuster trilogy. She's the gal who blasted away at those nasty Stormtroopers without a moment's compunction. She's Luke Skywalker's sister, Darth Vader's daughter, Jabba The Hutt's bikini-clad slave girl. She's the steely-nerved babe who watched her home planet get blown to bits without shedding a single tear. She is, in short, the most celebrated sci-fi heroine of all time. Today, however, Princess Leia is doing battle with a Betty Crocker Easy-Bake



THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK: (From left) Carrie Fisher ("Princess Leia") with Billy Dee Williams ("Lando Calrissian"), Harrison Ford ("Han Solo") and Peter Mayhew ("Chewbacca")

Oven. As I live and breathe, the diva with the famous "cheese Danish" hairdo is baking brownies with a precocious five-year-old in the kitchen. Life just doesn't get any more real than this.

As I wait for Fisher to get cleaned up, I take a gander at the living room. There's a large hand painted on the west wall that reminds me of one of those reflexology charts one is apt to see in New Age health books. Beside it hangs an oil painting of a grinning chimpanzee wearing a dress. The decor is an eclectic mix of antique: cheery Norman Rockwell Americana sits beside Medieval-looking religious icons and Native American pottery. Ceramic angels hang on wires from the high, vaulted ceiling. Stained glass windows, presumably from some Gothic cathedral of yore, are propped up in corners about the room. The effect is one of light and darkness. Innocence and knowledge. Fisher soon enters, dressed in flowing black garb. She seems to

CARRIE FISHER

"You'll never get this bucket of bolts past that blockade!"...It wasn't dialogue! Good dialogue means talking like human speech. George [Lucas] was writing speak from another galaxy."



7. While THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, good guys (Garry Dew Williams, Fisher Peter Mayhew, Harrison Ford) stride the Cloud City. 8. Fisher making her film debut as Leia in SHAMPOO (78). The late Williams Castle played a minor role.



glide across the floor, like Luke Skywalker's Land Cruiser, as she leads me into the den. Here she curls herself up on a soft chair and tells me a story.

"I once saw a personal ad in the paper that said, 'Carrie Fisher type,'" recounts the actress. "That's how this woman was herding herself. But then the ad said, 'No smoking, no drugging,' and I was like, 'Well, wait a minute, sister! Honey, there are some of those things that have happened!' So I called her and left a message, 'I am Carrie Fisher. Good luck if

you're my type!"

Fisher laughs with obvious amusement and takes a drag off her Marlboro Light. After all, her drug addiction is certainly no secret. The first child of singer Eddie Fisher and actress Debbie Reynolds, Fisher has spent her entire life under the constant glare of flashbulbs. When she was just two years old, her father abandoned the family to marry newly-widowed Elizabeth Taylor. Seemingly, Debbie Reynolds remarried in 1960, this time to wealthy shoe tycoon Harry Karl. Though he

initially took to fatherhood with enthusiasm, Karl turned to drinking, womanizing, stealing and gambling by the time Fisher was just struggling through puberty. Karl lost all the family's money and Fisher acquired a manic-depressive disorder. "I always wrote because I had a mania," she recalls, "and the outlet for that was writing. So I wrote about an emotional world which was sort of untenable for me at times. I would write rams of bullshit in my journal."

Fisher delayed the start of her secondary education

in order to travel to Las Vegas. Here, she and her brother Todd helped their mother with her nightclub act. Later, the threesome jetted across the country to New York, appearing in the Broadway revival of *Irene*. Finally, around about the time that most girls her age were heading off to college, Fisher gradually enrolled in an exclusive London high school called The Central School of Speech And Drama. She soon took time off from her studies to make her feature-film debut as Warren Beatty's young lover in SHAMPOO. Talk about playing hooky. Two years later, Fisher quit high school for good in order to accept the groundbreaking role of Princess Leia in STAR WARS. "This made for my slight English accent in the film," she explains. "It's hilarious to me now, but it was humiliating to me then."

I grill Fisher on a published report that Sinéad O'Connor had originally been cast as Princess Leia. It's been printed that Fisher was supposed to play the title role in CARRIE, Brian DePalma's prem-from-Hell horror film, and that the two actresses had actually swapped scripts.

"What's true is that Brian DePalma was casting CARRIE at the same time that George was casting STAR WARS," corrects Fisher. "It's the same age girl, so they were double casting. We did the casting at the same time, and they were either going to pretty or they were going to go with someone really pretty or they were going to go with someone forceful. They went with me and they told me to lose ten pounds. I was 19 at the time and I weighed only like 105. But I was 5'1, so it's legal to weigh 95 and not be called an anorexic, but I wasn't! I always say I'm a failed anorexic. I suck! I was an anorexic! Oh, sure, just what Hollywood needs: another drug-addicted bipolar actress with an eating disorder."

I fire off another question. "At the time STAR



STAR WARS: T: Darth Vader & his Imperial Guards escort Fisher to the Death Star destruction center. L: Fisher leads an SOS message, directed to Old Man Kenobi, within R2-D2. "George Lucas interviewed 400 girls for the Leia role and tested 50 of them."

WARS was first released, women were playing body bags in movies like SUSPIRIA, RABID, and Christopher Lee's MEATCLEAVER MASSACRE. Then along comes Princess Leia, leader of the Rebel Alliance. Did you have any idea of the impact this role would have on the world?"

"I can see what you mean in retrospect," Fisher replies, "but at the time, I didn't think it was odd. Like Leia, I think I have a very combative personality. I mean, I happen to be 5'1", but I think my voice is very tall. My biggest mistake would be if someone ever tries to steal my purse, and I literally thought that I was as powerful as my voice. I'd be killed. George Lucas cast us for our personality and our ability to clash or not."

Though Fisher says she felt lucky to land the part, she admits she was unhappy with her scripted dialogue. "You'll never get this bucket of bolts past that blockade," she snarls, quoting from the film. "I mean, it wasn't dialogue, but you can't say that's George's fault. Good dialogue means talking like human speech. George was writing speak

CARRIE FISHER

"I always wrote because I had a mania, and the outlet for that was writing. So I wrote about an emotional world which was untenable for me at times. I'd write reams of bullshit in my journal."



1) Fisher & Tom Hanks as the Paterfamilias in Jon Gruden's "warped view of suburban life," THE THURSDAY. 2) Trading barbs with Harrison Ford in "the garbage disposal scene: It was fun for 2 hours, then it got hot & boring." Peter Mayhew just stood up in that [Chewbacca] suit. 3) In THE GUARDIAN, a 1987 sci-fi satire.



but I didn't on the first one. I was too scared they were going to say, 'Oh, she's too fat! Get her out of here!'"

STAR WARS, as any 10-year-old can tell you, went on to become the second highest grossing film of all time. Only one year later, Fisher found herself hosting an episode of SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE. It was while palling around with cast members John Belushi and Chevy Chase that Fisher's feud with Percepsion and LSD began. In regard to her subsequent drug addiction, she was quoted in a 1990 Time article as saying, "My idea was pain reduction and mind expansion, but I ended up with mind reduction and pain expansion." The addiction continued throughout the filming of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK in 1980. In Harrison Ford's final scene, just before Vader gives Han Solo the deep freeze, Princess Leia feigns up to her affection for the swash-buckling smuggler. Ford was supposed to say, "I love you, too." But he was so perturbed with Fisher for repeatedly forgetting her lines that he instead grumbled, "I know you do." Today the line is a classic.

When John Belushi died of a cocaine overdose in 1982, it began to dawn on Fisher that perhaps this drug thing wasn't all it was cracked up to be. Nevertheless, in 1983, she filmed RETURN OF THE JEDI while still under the influence. She married singer/songwriter Paul Simon that same year, but he divorced her 11 months later when she failed to kick the habit. Fisher made a couple more genre pictures—a TV adaptation of Frankenstein and a Tom Hanks comedy, THE MAN WITH ONE RED SHOE—before overdosing on Percodan in 1985.

Upon her recovery from the Dark Side, Fisher wrote a semi-fictional account of her experiences in the rehab facility. The novel, Postcards from the Edge, became a New York Times best seller. Director Mike Nichols (THE GRADUATE, THE BIRD



from another galaxy, so it was an incredibly imaginative script. When I read it, I not only wanted to do it, but I wanted to play Han Solo's part! He was the best. Harrison [Ford, who played Han Solo] was really good at tinkering with the dialogue. I tinkered with the dialogue in the sequels [THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK and RETURN OF THE JEDI],

STAR WARS MEMORIES

CARRIE FISHER ON HER CASTING, CHEMISTRY, THE SCRIPT, SCI-FI.

BY MIKE CHILDS
& ALAN JONES

Born October 21, 1956, Carrie Fisher is the daughter of Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher. Prior to earning her role in *STAR WARS*, she debuted in *SHAMPOO* and studied drama at the Central School of Speech and Drama, her flippant sense of humor, however, is instinctive. We were introduced to Fisher just before she renewed her role as Princess Leia in *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* (which, during pre-production, had been tentatively titled *STAR WARS II*). The actress proved as verbally outspoken as the screen sovereign whom she turned into an icon. So let's flashback 22 years ago—

Do you like science fiction movies?

I'm no buff, but I like movies like *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* and *FORBIDDEN PLANET*—silly ones, too, like *THE TIME MACHINE*.

Did you have a lot of competition for your role as Princess Leia?

Yes, a lot. Everybody from 16 to 20 who could look 16. They never wanted any names, though, because they didn't want people to say, 'Oh, yeah! Nick Nolte is Luke Skywalker'—right. The characters had to be believable. This was of utmost importance. George interviewed about 400 girls, testing 50 of them.

Did you like the script as soon as you read it?

Oh yes, it was a great script, very detailed. George



Hunt, Fisher, Reynolds & Ford banded for *STAR WARS* and two sequels. "George Lucas had cast an ensemble piece. We pushed each other out."



"George Lucas calls *STAR WARS* the most expensive low-budget picture ever made." **L.** Lucas tried to purchase the rights to *BUCK ROGERS*, but settled on homage to that serial; sample Fisher & Hamill's "chewer" chase scene. **R.** Fisher gets the third degree from Darth Vader as the detention center's door slams shut **(R)**.

calls it the most expensive low-budget picture ever made, because they had to plan every shot. Everything had to be in that script. Once shooting commenced, they couldn't waiver from it. Every shot you see in the movie is in the script, including the effects.

What guidelines did Lucas give you?

"Faster and more intense." Those were his actual directions. At one stage he lost his voice and we joked about getting two boards fixed up each with their own horn on top and "Faster!" chalked on one and "More Intense!" chalked on the other. He also told me to stand up straight a lot and act more like a Princess.

Do you think you contributed to your role as much as you would have liked?

George didn't have the character well defined. He gave me a lot of freedom and responsibility. The first day I met George, he said I could change any dialogue I felt uncomfortable saying. In fact, I changed very little. Now when I see how I said a lot of it, I wish I'd changed more. But that's me being strict with myself. The only thing you couldn't tell from the script was the style and that was one thing that George communicated well to all of us.

For example, he wanted the dialogue read straight. Like, "I thought I recognized your foul stench, Yarkin." Not thrown away like I was originally going to do "When I come on board, you know, I thought, The smell—who is that?" George didn't want us to cheat like that. Go for broke. And I went for broke.

Was it always the intention to go for a juvenile fantasy approach?

George wanted to do a film he wanted to see. He and Gary Kurtz picked up a newspaper one Sunday to go see a movie, and there was nothing they wanted to rush out and see. They decided there weren't any good pictures around—FLASH GORDON if you will. But at least *STAR WARS* has everything in it.

George, at one stage, tried to buy the rights to the *BUCK ROGERS* series and *HOWARD THE DUCK* but they all wanted too much money, so he made his own.

The chemistry between you, Ford and Hamill works superbly. Was this hard work or natural?

George cast an ensemble piece. Apparently there were another three in cast we didn't work, but at no time would it have been mix and match. We didn't get along just like that. We carefully peached each other out. Harrison used to yell at me for not being able to decide where to eat, and Mark and I used to sing TV jingles together...but with suspicion. It took us about a week to decide exactly what George saw in the three of us together.



You didn't use a stunt girl. Were there any particularly dangerous scenes?

The chasm crossing was 30-feet and what is so annoying is that ultimately you can't even see that it is me. We only did that scene once and Mark and I were really scared. If we'd done it again it would have been more fun, but we were frightened that we'd split against the wall and they'd have to bring in Bobby Benson and Jodie Foster! The garbage disposal scene was fun for two hours and then it got hot and boring. We were wearing wet-suits under our outfits. Peter Mayhew [Chewbacca] just fried up in that suit.

What was the most difficult scene for you to shoot? It was all difficult, really. Acting is pretending. You have to use points of reference like an unhappy love affair. I don't know what

Hamill, Fisher and Ford in *STAR WARS* "take-out" scene "We joked the [script] would start up as we resumed bows after the presentation of the medals in the first film."





Fisher sustained his drug habit during *EMPIRE's* shoot. "My life was pain reduction and mind expansion. I ended up with mind reduction and pain expansion."

it's like to watch a planet which is my home being blown up. The fact that all I'm looking at is a chalked circle makes it worse. Also, you're under tremendous pressure. It's not just a case of fluffing your lines but that the sets have to be repaired and explosions re-rigged.

STAR WARS II originally was going to be a different story with a different cast. Why the change of mind?

Because everyone has become fond of these characters. It's the "further adventures of," not a sequel. We start filming at Elstree after Kubrick's *THE SHINING*. We had a joke at one stage that the next film would start as we resumed how after the presentation of the medals in the first film.

How do you want your

character to develop in *Part II*?

Well, I could marry Luke, but if I married Han, I think that would be more interesting, moooo from the point of view that we were always screaming at each other. I can also say that I never want to wear those hairy earphones again. I don't want Leia to be so straight next time. Not helpless or victimized, but the sort of girl who loses her passport on the spacecraft.

When did you see the completed film for the first time?

I watched the scoring in London, but I didn't see all the special effects until a week before it opened in the States. Even though I was so close to it, I could see and feel the magic it produced. I didn't know then that audiences would agree with me. □

In the driver's seat of the Millennium Falcon, with Chewbacca, in *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*. "I didn't think [Leia's engagement] was odd," recalls Fisher.



CARRIE FISHER

"We only did the [chasm crossing] scene once. Mark [Hamill] & I were scared. We were frightened that we'd splat against the wall, and they'd have to bring in Robby Benson & Jodie Foster."

CAGE) approached Fisher about adapting her novel into a screenplay. While working on the script, Fisher continued to appear in a string of comedies, including *HANNAH AND HER SISTERS*, *AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON*, *WHEN HARRY MET SALLY*, and Joe Dante's dark ode to suburbia, *THE BURBS*.

"Writing the book had been a breeze for me," Fisher says. "In novel writing, you can go into long descriptive narratives of an emotional sort. That's an organic thing for me to do. I don't think screenwriting's organic. Neither is novel writing, but there are certain areas that I've written stuff that's very specific to my manic depression. But there's no structure to that book, and there's no real story. There's a character. So when I got to the script, I had to make up a story. It had no bearing on that book at all."

The *POSTCARDS* movie is about the antagonistic relationship between a newly-detoxed actress (Meryl Streep) and her overbearing, alcoholic actress mother (Shirley MacLaine). The film has been repeatedly touted as semi-autobiographical, but Fisher swears she has a healthy, loving relationship with Debbie Reynolds.

Soon after the film's critically acclaimed release in 1990, director Steven Spielberg asked Fisher to punch-up Tinkerbell's dialogue in his *Peter Pan* sequel, *HOOK*. "I never understood what rewriting was," Fisher says, "but when I read *HOOK*, I realized Steven was right. Tinkerbell sounded like sort of a brat. So I wrote it more true to Peter Pan. Steven and I shared

what I used to call the secret handshake of shared sensibility. It was like the way that Paul [Simon] wrote, 'One man's ceiling is another man's floor.' That was the [metaphorical] writing that I adored—and Steven Spielberg has this, too. It's an enormously esoteric thing to have in common if you are in love with words and the rhythm of words. Really terrific directors—in addition to being great craftsmen, in addition to having a good story—can sit there and they can get the best out of a writer."

It was while working on *HOOK* that George Lucas

Fisher showed more than her comic persona in *UNDER THE PARASOL* (1985), a flashback to *QZ* that flopped.





Fisher makes a transition from slave girl to assassin in RETURN OF THE JEDI (1983). "Like Princess Leia, I think I have a very combative personality," says Fisher.

asked Fisher to write a television episode of THE INDIANA JONES CHRONICLES. "George is incredibly visual," Fisher says. "There's different kinds of ways of expressing yourself, and George has an extraordinary visual conception. I have my metaphors. They're visual, but they're still verbal. So when it comes to

writing dialogue, George and I disagreed."

This particular episode happened to find young Indy losing his virginity to the famous WWI spy Mata Hari. "In the love scene," explains Fisher, "George wanted to say stuff like, 'Your eyes are shining as brightly as the emeralds in your necklace.' And I said,

'George, people don't talk like that.' Subsequently, there was more said that was hilarious and insulting to both of us. We had those little boxes where you could push a button and they said, 'Fuck you, eat shit, you're an asshole.' And we just were pushing those and pushing those at each other, and that's how it kind of dis-

integrated. I finally got my way but then he rewrote me, I think. George is George. Both he and Steven are very, very clear about what they want. In a way, Steven's like a child; he really enjoys himself. Steven is so much fun to work around. But, in a way, I think they're both like that. They both love myth and they

LI STAR WARS director George Lucas tutors Fisher and Mark Hamill on "steamy cruising. It was 30 feet, and what is so amazing is that ultimately you can't even see that it's real" says the actress. (R) Fisher & Ford, reunited for EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (formerly STAR WARS II), dodge an Imperial attack on Hoth.



love entertaining children. They both have this extraordinary delight. They both love motion pictures and they love information of different sorts. They take risks."

Since first taking pen to paper for Spielberg and Lucas, Fisher has rewritten over 30 scripts, including *LETHAL WEAPON 3*, *OUTBREAK* and *THE RIVER WILD*, as well as films as diverse as *SISTER ACT* and *THE MIRROR HAS TWO FACES*. She says that her jokes can come to her "any way in the world," but especially through her friends and agents. Today she's one of the highest paid script doctors in Hollywood.

"If I've brought in on anything other than romantic comedies, it's generally to punch up the female or love scenes," she says. "There's usually those types of scenes in most movies. Generally, in being a script doctor, you respect the fact that somebody else did the hardest part of this. Which is, they came up with the story and characters and they wrote a movie. And what you're brought on to do is maintain the style of that movie, maybe give them some more jokes. This is in the best of all possible worlds. And that's a polish, you know? Make some of the scenes a little bit better. But, you know the three biggest lies? I love you, one size fits all, and just a two-week polish."

In addition to *POSTCARDS* and her ongoing script doctoring work, Fisher has written two other novels. *Surrender the Pink*—the title refers to female gentility—was published in 1990 and became another best-seller. In a fictional sense, it deals with the author's relationship with Paul Simon. Spielberg and Dons Moore were initially attached to the screen adaptation, but Fisher still hasn't found the time to write a second draft. This is due, in large part, to that precocious five-year-old in Fisher's kitchen. The little darling runs into the den at

CARRIE FISHER

"I never want to wear those hairy earphones again. I don't want Leia to be so straight next time: not helpless or victimized, but the sort of girl who loses her passport on the spacecraft."



The beautiful Fisher has survived a drug problem, a fairly turbulent life. (C) Cast in "Reckless Youth," a mock TV documentary tagged to the end credits of *AMARON WOMEN ON THE MOON* (comic Leonard Maltin declares it as the "best" of the Star's work). (R) An unreleased cameo as *AUSTIN POWERS*' therapist.



this moment to offer her mother a big chocolate-covered kiss. Then she bangs on the piano a bit, passes some gas, says excuse me to the nice reporter, and tears out of the room. "That's what happens," smiles Fisher apologetically.

Fisher became a mother in 1993. At the time, she was dating ex-CAA agent Bryan Leard. After their daughter Billie was born, Leard announced he was leaving them for another man, but the two are still close friends, currently sharing parenting duties. Fisher's third novel, *Delusions of Grandeur*, was published in 1993. "It's about the disintegration of a screenwriter's relationship and exploring the roots of her family."

I ask her, "Do you think it's possible for an ambitious, strong woman to have a successful romantic relationship in Hollywood?" I ask her.

"Not easily, no," she says, hursting my bubble. "Not in Hollywood. You have to be with somebody who isn't threatened at all by being Mr. Fisher or Mr. Whomever. Men can bring their wives on the movie set, or with them on location, but women real-



ly can't bring their husbands. Ultimately, the men get emasculated, perhaps without even knowing that that's what's occurred."

"So what would you say is the greatest challenge that women face in this town?" I ask.

"It's a man's world," Fisher tells me. "Women don't get paid as much, we aren't expected to have as much

longevity. The greatest asset for a woman in this town is still her looks. It's like we burn out when we get a little long in the tubes, as they say. The qualities that make a woman good at her job, and the qualities that are necessary to push her hard in her field in Hollywood, are qualities that would make her not that attractive for a relationship. I mean, it's still thought that if a woman marries a powerful man, it's just as successful a move as if she wins a Pulitzer. You can be with someone who wins a Pulitzer, or you can win one yourself, and it's about the same thing. I don't personally think that's true—I'd rather win the Pulitzer. But it's something that I've noticed. I knew a woman who won a Pulitzer and she's not as satisfied as the women I know who are in relationships with very powerful men. I think it's an immense ac-

CARRIE FISHER

“I wanted to play Han Solo’s part. Harrison Ford was really good at tinkering with dialogue. I tinkered with dialogue in the sequels but not the first. I was scared they’d say, ‘She’s too fat.’”



7. Fisher as one of Jakob the Hutt's henchmen in RETURN OF THE JEDI. Jennifer Aniston slipped into the abbreviated toga for a fantasy sequence in FRIENDS. 8. Warning, warning. Gaudipal alert! Leia (Fisher) comforts Luke (Hanks) in their short-lived STAR WARS liaison. 9. With a taste in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK



down, the novel deals partly with mental disorders. There are other undertakings that have also been put on hold or otherwise delayed. Around the time that Bille was born, Fisher sold a TV pilot called ESME'S LITTLE NAP, which she'd written as a starring vehicle for her mother. She says it never aired because it didn't test well. Then there's CHRISTMAS IN VEGAS, a screenplay that originated as a short story about a 15-year-old girl who goes to Las Vegas with her friends and becomes embroiled with the Mafia. "It was supposed to be in *Paradise* the book, and then it never was," says Fisher. "Then I signed a deal with Disney to do it as a screenplay, but I never really did it because the person I was working with wanted me to really write about my childhood in Las Vegas. At that time, I didn't really know how to do that without it being so autobiographical where you'd go insane. I'd like to go back and do it some day." Fisher rolls her eyes. "Being a writer is a perfect job for a high school dropout. I have homework for the rest of my life."

Fisher, now 43, says she's deliberately trying to take it easier in an effort to eradicate some of the stress in her life. About a year ago, she was hospitalized for an episode of manic depression unlike any she'd ever experienced before. "I think it was just the pressure cooker of having had a child and working for five years. I just want to take all these jobs and I tend to get overworked. I'm my mother's daughter, who literally is The Unsinkable Molly Brown. She literally will go on stage with a broken ankle."

Fisher tells me that she has no plans to return to acting any time soon. And directing? No, thank you. "I know Penny Marshall too well, and it seems to put a lot of pressure on her," she

compliment for women to have both a successful career and a successful relationship. I think the only person I know who's done both is Meryl Streep."

Fisher's latest book, due out "about two years ago," has also taken a back seat to her motherhood responsibilities. Tentatively called *Holding Hands Through Plate Glass Win-*



Fisher, as an aspiring Playboy bunny, meets "Her" in a **LAVINNE & SHIRLEY** school. She also served as Producer in the **CARNE ON HOLLYWOOD** series (195).

says of her long-time friend, who helmed **BIG** and **A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN**. "She doesn't make it look like the most fun gig in the world. Plus, with a kid and everything—I can't stand getting up at those hours! That's why acting is so unappealing. That and not being able to be ten pounds overweight."

And what about recent Tinseltown reports that Fisher is rewriting George Lucas' script for the new **STAR WARS** EPISODE I—**THE PHANTOM MENACE**? In this case, at least, the doctor is out. Says Fisher, "As his friend, I read the script, but I did not sit and tinker with it." She slyly adds, "I wouldn't say if I did, because

he's not [signature to] the [Writers] Guild [and] they'd come after me." Though sworn to absolute secrecy, Fisher is at liberty to reveal that "the robots got a lot of the comedy" in the new script for the prequel.

So what is Carrie Fisher working on these days? Currently she's writing a feature film for Disney called **THREE**

OLD BROADS, about a trio of aging actresses who do not get along. "I still plan to do books," she says, "and I can see how I might be able to schedule the time out. You know, where I would write scripts during the day and I could write a novel or whatever at night. On the weekend I would be able to parent." Brownies, anyone? □

RETURN OF THE JEDI: L. Entering Jabba's palace, Luke is bewildered by Leia's captivity (not to mention the brevity of her attire). R. Leia meets a laser canon as Jabba's barge. The princess was hurried into a (50¢ limited edition doll) clad in **HERN TRENTS** & paired with **70-02**. It was accessible only through **PAC SCHWES**.



STAR WARS

MARIA DE ARAGON

GENRE-BENDING A SCI-FI ICON: REFLECTIONS OF "GREEDO" BY THE ACTRESS CAST AS THE ROOTIN'-TOOTIN' EXTRATERRESTRIAL.

BY RUSSELL LISSAU

"Going somewhere, Solo?"

With those three little words, a shifty, big-eyed bounty hunter named Greedo was catapulted into STAR WARS lore. Although his big face-off with Han Solo in the Mos Eisley cantina only lasted about a minute, Greedo has become one of the more beloved second-string characters in the STAR WARS universe. He's appeared in several spin-off novels, comic books and there are several web sites on the Internet dedicated to the wart-covered Rodian. Visitors are invited to download Greedo biographies, Greedo screen savers and hilarious photographs of Greedo superimposed in other movies.

Despite Greedo's status as something of a born-again cult hero, fans often are surprised to learn the actor who played the role is actually a woman. Maria de Aragon. Like many of the other actors who were concealed within elaborate alien or robotic costumes in the STAR WARS trilogy, de Aragon never drew the global celebrity that Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford or Mark Hamill tallied as a result of the films' success. But de Aragon, now 36 years old, is trying to cash in on the STAR WARS phenomenon by participating in the "Men Behind the Masks" tour. During most of the past year, she's visited comic book and science fiction conventions around the country, meeting thousands of adoring fans, signing thousands of autographs and earning a few bucks along the way. The activity is a far cry from her regular job as an Amway distributor in California.

"I'm just glad to be here," de



Maria de Aragon wore the Greedo costume. The actress portrays the bounty hunter as "a victim—he was just doing his job."

Aragon grinned at Chicago's Wizard World convention, where she appeared with ensemble players David Prowse ("Darth Vader"), Kenny Baker ("R2-D2") and Jeremy Bulloch ("Boba Fett"). To her credit, the other actors on the "Masks" tour are happy to have de Aragon along for the ride. Until she joined the caravan last year, it was pretty much a boys club, although Femi Taylor ("Oola," Jabba the Hutt's dancing girl), and Caroline Blakiston (Rebel leader "Mon Mothma") have appeared in various cities as well. "It's nice to have a bit of

glamour," noted Bulloch regarding de Aragon's contribution to the tour.

Unlike Prowse, Baker and Bulloch, de Aragon only briefly appeared in the first STAR WARS film—before she was blown to bits by Han Solo. Prior to the sci-fi film's 1977 release, de Aragon's primary job was as a limousine driver for the stars, including Elton John and Elvin Presley.

She was no stranger to performing on the stage and screen, but none of de Aragon's previous gigs approximated the prosperity of George Lucas' classic. "It was very exciting," said de Aragon, recounting her STAR WARS experience. "It was more fun than what I was doing."

De Aragon wasn't even supposed to be cast as Greedo when she signed-on with Lucasfilm in '76. But luck, or perhaps the Force, was with her. "I was hired to do G-3PO in pick-up shots for three or four days," she recalled. "But then Mark Hamill had an accident, and they killed those scenes. So they said they would give me my very own monster."

Not surprisingly, the combination of makeup and wardrobe was a bit claustrophobic. "The Greedo part was very limited in more than one way," de Aragon explained. "I couldn't see anything, and I had a straw between my teeth so I could breathe and speak."

Not that Greedo did much speaking—or breathing. De Aragon said she'd prefer the unlucky Rodian to be remembered not as a pistol packin' opportunist who let Solo get the drop on him, but as a loyal employee of Jabba the Hutt, i.e. someone who died in the



T: George Lucas directs de Aragon, as Greedo, during shooting of the "Gardina" post-production inserts. Makeup effects supervisor Doug Beswick, in background, is now credited to the spectacle of Ewok's Fat Kevin Effects. B: Musing Han Solo (Harrison Ford). C: Signing autographs at a recent sci-fi convention.



MARIA DE ARAGON

"After the accident, they killed my scenes as C-3PO in pick-up shots and gave me my own monster."

line of service. "He was a victim," de Aragon said with a genuine smile. "He was doing his job—that's all he was doing."

Though Greedo's running time was short-lived, a history has been created for the character in STAR WARS' literary appendages. Fans have learned about his race, his planet, his experience as an armed profiteer and even his "whereabouts" after the fated showdown. In case you're curious, Wuker, the Mos Eisley cantina's bartender, compressed Greedo's flesh and blood into a powerful, intoxicating drink for Jabba the Hutt.

De Aragon hopes Greedo will be resurrected for the STAR WARS prequels, but, with the high level of secrecy on the projects, she hasn't heard if the overconfident bounty hunter—or any of his Rodian relatives—will be called upon. "There's still a mystery



about that, and only the good George knows," she said, referring to Lucas. "But if I was to do more acting, I would love to do it behind a mask again. It was fun."

In the meantime, de Aragon is quite content traveling from convention to convention, spending time with the fans who have kept the legacy alive from sequel to prequel. "I love it," she said. "It's more important to meet the people than to be in the films." □

BEST ADDRESSED





99 Cover girl Menen Kelley (H/T), posing as Vampire for photo Stephen F. Meyer, played a "OD: World girl" for Tron: On. She's also cast as central characters in PC interactive games. Kelley, who's all compared to Pam Anderson, developed her own franchise in cyberspace (page 30).

SEXY IN CYBERSPACE: A DIRECTORY & CRITICAL SUMMARIZATION OF WEB SITES DEVOTED TO FEMMES FATALES, SCI-FI SIRENS & B-QUEENS.



The mesmerizing Michelle Sauer (43) is the stuff that R-legendary are made of: R-rated comedienne, starting actress R effortlessly sexy. The best, since, we appeal to her love to develop a site that improves upon an excellent web which celebrates her career.

By LAURA SCHIFF

Has this ever happened to you? You want to learn more about your favorite femme fatale, so you tap into one of the dozens of search engines on the Internet. Thousands of addresses appear on your screen that may or—in most cases—may not relate to your query subject. Who the hell has time to sift through all this flotsam and jetsam anyway? Slow servers only compound the problem, and half the day is gone before you've found what you're looking for.

Femme Fatales has the answer to your problem. I have tirelessly slaved over my PC to bring you the finest FF-related web sites in cyberspace. What you won't find here are web sites tied into handy "XXX Nude Celebrity" confections, most of these poverty-row sites are just out to make a very lucrative profit for themselves, though the actresses—most of whom are unaware that grainy reproductions of their R-rated movie scenes are photographed, without authorization, off a monitor—never see a penny of it. We at FF figure that if a woman's exposing her tats to all the world, she should be compensated for it, not exploited. Non-pornographic web pages for some of our favorite ladies of cinema simply do not exist or are so amateurish they're not worth mentioning. Can anyone tell me why there are no decent sites for Jacqueline Lovell, Elisabeth Brooks, Nancy Allen or Linda Hamilton? I'd really like to know. That said, I was stunned by a plethora of wonderful fan sites out there. I've e-mailed many of the webmasters and credited their creativity whenever possible. So sit back, grab your mouse, and take advantage of my "unique" four-star rating system.

GINGER LYNN ALLEN

Ginger's Paradise (<http://www.gingerlynn.com>) is the

official web site of the former porn star and Penthouse model. Most recently, she's appeared in the mainstream films **BOUND** & **GAGGED** and **WHORE**. The site features tour info, merchandise and enough nude photos to make a sailor blush. Excuse me while I scour my mouse finger. ★★

GILFAN ANDERSON

Puck's official X-FILES site (<http://www.thex-files.com/index.html>) is one of my all-time favorite addresses on the web. Here you'll find a QuickTime trailer of the X-FILES movie, a comprehensive episode guide, a chat room, sound and video clips for every episode, collectibles and more. On the minus side, the last time I checked, the graphics were incredibly hard to read and there weren't nearly enough photos of Anderson, the series' smart and sexy lead. For that, you have to go to The Best of Gilfan Anderson (<http://www.gso.cities.com/Hollywood/Leit/3870>), a fan site maintained by Yuri Luchessa. There's 219 images of Anderson here, as well as interviews, more video clips, and interviews. Truly! Official X-Files site ★★ ★; The Best Of Gilfan Anderson ★★ ★

PAMELA ANDERSON

Param's official web site (<http://www.pamelander.com/intro/intro.html>) is maintained by her brother, who's obviously making a bundle off his famous sis. Starting at \$6 per month, you'll gain access (so we're told) to photos, news, merchandise and chat rooms. If you're not willing to shell out the clams, don't even bother with this site. You'll find a nice selection of links to various fan sites at <http://www.hot100.com/stars/pamelander.html>. Unfortunately, though, photos of the **BAYWATCH** gal are plentiful, there's not a whole



"I'm creating a completely different universe," Pam Anderson told *FF* (top). But the official site created for her cyberspace debut is a less than heavenly body.

lot of interviews or biographical info out there. Official site ★, www.hot100.com site ★

MELINDA DREW

Okay, so she's a character, not an actress. Still, can you imagine this act-fi classic's title frame played by anyone other than Jane Fonda? We just can't seem to get enough of her! At **Barbarella: Queen Of The Galaxy** (<http://www.groocities.com/Aron51/8912>), a sound clip greets you with, "Well! That's nice!" I couldn't agree more. Webmaster Starhied has loaded his site with 34 wave files and another 30+ images in full, gorgeous color, making the 1968 film seem fresher than ever. This is also the place to go if you're looking for vintage movie posters. ★★ ★

DREW BARRYMORE

Barrymore fans—I call

them **Drewwids**—are a functional lot, and there are lots of sites on the web to choose from. Personally, I favor the distinctly girlish touch of the **Drew Barrymore Is Love** site (<http://www-personal.usm.mich.edu/~melinda/drew/drew.html>), which is maintained by kew! Goth babe, Melinda—love this girl! Message boards, photos, movie reviews, even pics of other Drew fans can all be found at this fun 'n' funky address. Links to other Drew sites, too. ★★ ★

MICHELLE BAUER

Picture Palace owners Steve and Jennifer have created a home page with Michelle Bauer's blessing (<http://peep.com/mbauer.html>). All this site has to offer is a filmography of the former adult film actress that is downright degrading. It reduces this very talented woman to mere body parts. Sample the **ARMED RE-**

SPONSE ('86) excerpt: "Breasts, dancing on stage." I can't imagine why Bauer ever agreed to authorize this site and I sincerely wonder if she's even seen how sleazy it is. Zero.

LINDA BLAIR

The Official Linda Blair Web Site (<http://members.aol.com/ultraindy/JDouglas/index.htm>) is maintained by fans John Douglas and Chad Elbert. It offers a few nice if sedate photos of Blair, as well as an extensive biography, news, and a chat room (empty when I checked). Frankly, I was disappointed. Even worse, this is the best site out there that is dedicated to our favorite demon gal. It's enough to make your head spin. ★

CLAUDIA CHRISTIAN

Had trouble keeping my eyes open while surfing The Official Claudia Christian Web Page (<http://www.dread.com/christian>). It's a decent site, with about 40 photos of **BABYLON 5's** ex-commander, detailed bio, related links and an in-depth history of Christian's character.

"I was disrespected badly" from **BABYLON 5**," said Claudia Christian (left). Check her web for updates & titbits.



acter, Susan Ivanova. Nevertheless, this address left me kinda cold. I prefer the personal touch of fan Roy Bhakta's Shrine to Claudia Christian (<http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Corridor/2261/shrinetoc.html>). Here you'll find all the usual stuff, but with a quirkier edge. Loved the sexy photo of a topless Christian displaying her tattoo. Ditto the animated "pulsing heart" graphics. Official CC Web Page ★★; Roy Bhakta's Shrine to CC ★★★

YVONNE CRAIG

Holy time warp! When I tapped into Yvonne Craig's Official Home Page (www.yvonnecraig.com) and saw that autographed photo of Bat Girl on her BatCycle, I had to spring for it! This site is the bomb. It's not just the bright retro colors, the awesome photos from BATMAN and STAR TREK, and the sound clip from the 1967 Batgirl pilot intro that make this one of the coolest addresses on the Web; it's the fact that living legend Yvonne Craig has injected the entire site with her zany sense of humor and adventure. I feel like I know her.

Yvonne Craig, #1 on FP's list of Sci-Fi's 50 Sexiest (7/18), retains a high batting average with her sexy web.



Catherine Deneuve, whose legacy includes BELLE OISEAUX, played a vamp in THE HUNGER. Details on the film are culled from an otherwise loaded site.

On the latest BATMAN & ROBIN movie: "I honestly don't care whose outfit does or does not have nipples but every time Batman's cape flew up in a rear shot, I wondered why he had a padded butt." BAM!! ★★★

JENNIE LEE CURTIS

There are plenty of sites on the Web that are devoted to this undeniably talented actress, but Norwegian fan Gunnar Solberg's Jennie Lee Curtis page (<http://www.islat.no/~curt/jenilec.htm>) wins my vote for the best. Packed with pictures, music, animated graphics, and enough links to keep you surfing for hours ★★ 1/2

QUEEN DALY

British actress Eileen Daly's "first and only web

site" (<http://easywebeasy.net/~dali~catherine/index>) has everything you've ever wanted to know about the UK's #1 B-movie babe. Jack in for full-screen photos from her films PERVIRELLA, RAZOR BLADE SMILE etc., plus all the latest news. ★★

CATHERINE DENEUVE

The best English-language web site dedicated to this wonderful French actress is The Catherine Deneuve Homepage (<http://homepage.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/Susanne.M.Swolski/deneuve/>). Maintained by Susanne Swolska, this site is well-written and comprehensive. Here you'll find two insightful interviews, Deneuve's biography, filmography, loads of audio clips, and half a dozen movie trail-

ers on QuickTime. Her gracefulness comes across beautifully in the almost 50 images available. Down side: the server tends to be a bit sluggish, and there's nothing here about THE HUNGER ★★★

ELVIRA

Ah, Elvira, Mistress of the Dark! Where would we be without your campy vamp? Web master Buzz Lovko's Elvira Page (<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Hill/6268/Elvira.htm>) is a really fun fan site with loads of never-before-seen photos of Elvira, who wrote two stories for Claypool Comics' Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, includes some of his Elvira fiction, as well as animated graphics, news, merchandise, interviews and sound clips—my favorite: "There's nothing quite like Elvira's monster hits. Hits, I said Hits" ★★★

TERRY FARRELL

Fan Bob Mason has put together a nice little tribute page to Terry Farrell (<http://www.theyknow.com/dax/>). The site was undergoing construction when I tapped in, but I did find several pics of Farrell as STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE's Lt. Dax, as well as links and a QuickTime movie. Mason promises audio clips, convention news, and more. Can't wait to see it when it's fully loaded. ★★

LINDA FLORENTINO

The Mysterious World of Linda Fiorentino (<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Academy/8215/Main.html>) offers many glamorous, sexy photos of this Femme in Black. Her bio is well-written and I appreciate webmaster Sayer's wit. Lots of interviews here, too. Choice quote, regarding her roles in VISION QUEST and GOTCHA: "I am the virgin de-flowerer of Hollywood. I break in all the boys." ★★

JODIE FOSTER

I was astonished to discover that there aren't a whole lot of web sites out there that are dedicated to this incredibly versatile actress. The best I could find was Jodie Foster: An Admirer's Perspective (<http://www.lesbian.com/shrine/jodie/jodie.htm>). Maintained by lesbian web mistress E. Falken, this fan page is simple and user friendly. It offers a personal and thought-provoking look at Foster's impact on one devoted fan. Sound bytes and lots of provocative pics. Don't miss Foster's wonderful, introspective essay, "Why Me?" An excerpt: "My dean explained to me that my pictures and address had been found on [Reagan would-be assassin John Hinckley]. I felt the tears welling up in my eyes. My body started shaking and I knew that I had lost control... maybe for the very first time in my life." ★ ★ ★

NIKKI FRITZ

The Official Web Site for Nikki Fritz (<http://www.nikki.fritz.com>) is a fun place to hang out when you've got some time to spare. There's animated graphics (love the flying hat!), merchandise, sound clips, and lots of photos (most of them nude). Of course, you need to be a member of Fritz's fan club for the really juicy stuff. ★ ★

PAM GRIER

Check out the funky digs at The Pam Grier Experience (<http://www.castle.net/~dentary/pam/index.html>). I love the kitschy '70s graphics. According to Dan Century, who maintains the fab address, "Pam's agents [praised] the web site. They promise to provide us with



The annual hotties of FF's Halloween issues since 1999, Grier beckons you to get caught on her web. Sample her "limited edition" merchandising items, including Joseph Losey's *Masters of the Dark* model kit. 1

an official fan mail address soon." The first time I visited this site, it was chock full of sound clips, a JACKIE BROWN movie trailer and a gallery of cool images. The second time I jacked in, the files were gone. I'm assuming the site is under construction. Suggest you see for yourself. ★ ★ ★

DARYL HANNAH

The Daryl Hannah Uncensored Home Page (<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/1406/thindex.html>) has over 50 gorgeous photos—sure to make a SPLASH. Web master Zoso's written an interesting bio—did you know that, as a child, Daryl Hannah was first thought to be autistic? I didn't. Points off for poor spelling. ★ ★ 1/2

Salma Hayek

Log onto Salma Cam (<http://www.salma.com>) to find out all about Mexico's hottest export. Tons of photos and terrific sound bytes from her interviews. To wit, Salma on Mexican immigrants: "I think that Mexico has given a lot to the United States. For example, Texas." Supposedly, there

"I'm strong-willed," said Salma Hayek (R), recounting her saucy persona. Is her web equally as tempestuous?



"I've done really wild modeling," Natasha Henstridge referred to FF (R). "But it's very different [from film]." Though SPECIES was a sleeper, her other career choices have been at MAXIMUM RISK (R). Consider Henstridge's Essential site.

are about half a dozen movie clips as well, including her famous Stanisco dance scene (FROM DUSK TIL DAWN), but the links weren't there when I tried. I heard a rumor that Hayek's lawyers were threatening to sue the webmaster of this site, but nobody's talking. ★ ★

NATASHA HENSTRIDGE

I was saddened to find that The Essential Natasha Henstridge Site (<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/6550/index.html>) is now closed until the summer. The name pretty much says it all—I happened upon it once and it blew me away. In lieu of this, however, is The Definitive Natasha Henstridge Webpage (<http://www.cn.huffalo.edu/~jral>)—not as flashy, but it'll do in a pinch. Over 100 photos of

Henstridge, including several from SPECIES. Interviews and sound bytes. The Essential Natasha Henstridge Site ★ ★ ★, The Definitive Natasha Henstridge Webpage ★ ★

JENNIFER HUSE

Not much to see at Jennifer Huse's official web site (<http://gmx.com/modent/jhuse1.html>)—just one page with four photos. Jennifer promises to add more in the future. Here's hoping. ★

MILLA JOVOVICH

Colin Cushing's Sense o' Milla page (<http://www.sakim.com/~milla>) has just about everything you'd want to know about this model/actress/singer. There's lots of glamorous photos, sound clips from Jovovich's CD The Divine Comedy, interviews, news and oodles more about director

Lae Hossain's sweetheart. It's ELEGANTary! ★ ★ ★

ALEXANDER KEITH

Alexander Keith (né Wendy Schumacher) has a new identity and a new official web site to go with it! Tap into www.alexanderkeith.com to see plenty of pics of Keith's short platinum 'da. You'll also get news, a complete filmography, fan club info, and behind-the-scenes photos from her movies (including new releases PROPHECY and COUNTER MEASURES). ★ ★ 1/2

MANON KELLEY

(VAMPIRE MODEL) I keep begging Vampire creator/writer/artist Fauve to get her comic book its own web site. Alas, my cries fall on ears that are already overworked. I guess the world will just have to wait a while longer for that one. Until then, fans can tap into the official web site of Manon Kelley (<http://www.gmx.com/modent/mkel1.html>). Kelley is the Pam Anderson look-alike model who poses for Fauve as Bethany, the superhero heroine who gives the Vampire comic its romantic heart. Manon's address is mostly just a big merchandising sales pitch (photos, model kit, "puzzle software" for \$9.99, but you can find some nice photos here, even if none of them are full-screen. ★

LUCKY LAWLESS

Universal Studios' official XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS site (<http://www.universalstudios.com/tw/xena>) is the ultimate place to go for info on everything about Lucky Lawless. This address is jam-packed—a comprehensive overview of the show, episode guide, character and actor bios, a complete station list, XENA merchandise, a NetForum, even an interactive on-line game to download! Conspic-

usually absent: sound and video clips, animated graphics. Not enough photos of Lawless, either. But, fear not, brave surfer—The Lucy Lawless Site of the Century (<http://www.geocities.com/hollywood/Hills/8871/lucy.html>) has you covered! Lots of glamour shots of the blue-eyed beauty here. Universal site ★ ★ ★; Site of the Century ★ ★

Soft Bodies

Visit Soft Bodies (<http://www.softbodies.com>) for actress/Playboy model Beck Leffers's official home page. Lots of naughty, naked pics, and not one ounce of soft-core. Says the webmistress, "I set this website up as a tribute to my loyal fans and to remind everyone else how wonderful natural female beauty can be since it seems like lately, a lot of people have forgotten what a real woman looks like." ★ ★

Hudson Leick

The Hudson Leick Official Fan Club Web Page (<http://hudsonleickfan.com>) is the place to go for info on Xena's arch rival, Callisto. Over 750 images, 100+ sound clips (my favorite: "I want her dead! Do it! Do it!"). Apparently, there are also 26 Real Video clips, but when I checked, there was nothing doing. ★ ★ 1/2

Traci Lords

I found Traci Lords' official home page (<http://www.radioactive.net/BAND/STRACI/traci.html>) to be a big yawner. It completely focuses on her so-called career as a "techno music diva," and has nothing—repeat, nothing—about her almost 100 films. Lords' biography is one big, laughable white wash job—no mention at all

"We're applying video to my site," says Soft Bodies' Becky Leffers, who comments, "There aren't many natural, pretty girls in Hollywood as opposed to hard, artificially enhanced girls."





Abandoning pearls, Tracy Lords (1-5, 716)—strapping-on a bikini for the last time in film—made her franchise debut in Jim Wynant's remake of **NOT OF THIS EARTH** (1988). One of Lords' web sites is a whitewash, but the other one is a whine.

of her life prior to 1993. It's as if Ms. Lords would like us all to be stricken with collective amnesia regarding her years as a porn star—personally, I find it insulting. Supposedly, you can hear sound clips from her album, **1000 FIRES**, but it didn't work when I tried. The QuickTime music videos are pretty cool if you happen to have 40 minutes to kill while they're downloading. Better you should worship at The Temple of Tracy Lords (<http://users.aol.com/Lordsman/traci.htm>), a fan site maintained by a metal-head dude named Dan. Music, graphics, sound clips, sexy photos, complete filmography, merchandise, Dan's uncensored Lords bio doesn't pull any punches—excerpt: "She got pregnant the first time she had sex (in fact this wasn't the first time, because she was raped by her own father) and paid for her own abortion." An interesting site about a fascinating woman. Official Home Page ★, The Temple of Tracy Lords ★★ ★

ATHENA MASSEY

The Athena Massey Devotion Page ([\[realmbbs.com/amassey/\]\(http://realmbbs.com/amassey/\)\) is a nice little tribute to this lovely actress. Massey, twice profiled in *FF* \(4-7, 5-7\), is the modern femme of film noir. The 96 images located here really showcase Massey's fresh, wholesome looks to their best advantage.](http://www.</p>
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A sound page featuring WAV files from Massey's films was under construction when I dropped by. Small site but sincere. ★★

CHASE MASTERSON

The Chase Masterson Official Fan Club (<http://members.aol.com/DABOpago/index.htm>) has all the latest news on the actress who plays Leeta on **STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE**. Maintained by German fan Ralf Franken, the site also offers a complete biography, club info, fan forum and about 25 photos, some of which are for sale. ★★

LORISZA MCCOMBS

Fans who are over 18 can visit Lorisza McCombs' official web page at www.lorisza.com. The erotic actress obviously put a lot of work

into this site and it shows. I loved reading her biography, which details all the major highlights of McCombs' career, starting with winning \$500 in a bikini contest at age 16. There's lots of pictures here, from sweet to vamps, as well as up-to-the-minute news and merchandise—she charges \$3 for her "lipstick kiss" on any item. ★★

DINA MEYER

The Dina Meyer Cyber-space Headquarters (<http://home1.swipnet.se/~w-10131/index.html>) pays respectful homage to this sci-fi diva. Check out pictures from **STARSHIP TROOPERS**, **DRAGONHEART**, and **JOHNNY MNEMONIC**, and a couple of transcripts from AOL interviews. I found myself wanting more bells and whistles, though. The Beautiful Dina Meyer page (<http://www.hum.auc.dk/~aarling/dina.html>) offers 80 additional photos of Meyer, but they take forever and a day to download. Only for the most diehard of fans. Dina Meyer Cyberspace Headquarters ★★, The Beautiful Dina Meyer ★★

ALYSSA MILANO

Reading the former child actress' bio in The Official Alyssa Milano Website (<http://www.alysa.com>) is like a trip down Memory Lane. Milano's remembrances of **WHO'S THE BOSS** and her role as Arnold Schwarzenegger's daughter in **COMMANDO** ("Arnold helped me with my algebra homework") are interesting and sentimental. Milano is notorious for trying to eradicate all topless photos of herself on the web (mostly frame grabs from **EMBRACE OF THE VAMPIRE**), and all the images in this official site are strictly rated PG. ★★

Scratching her sweet image, Alyssa Milano turned spicy in **EMBRACE OF THE VAMPIRE** (3-4) and **SORORITY GIRL** (3). Show the boss on her site.



KATE MULGREW

The Kate Mulgrew Appreciation Society has assembled a site dedicated to the actress who plays Captain Kathryn Janeway on **STAR TREK: VOYAGER**. Now Voyager (<http://members.aol.com/howay/>) offers a bio and information on joining the fan club. It also offers only the most be-hum parts of the monthly

New Voyager newsletter—that is, plenty of fan chitchat but no photos or interviews with Mulgrew. The reasoning here is that you have to be a paying member to see the real McCoy (so to speak). Unfortunately, this makes for a rather boring web site. I was hoping for something more Engage-ing. ★ ★

RENEE O'CONNOR

If you're looking for a good overview on the gal who plays Gabrielle, Kena's faithful sidekick, the best place to start is Universal Studios' official KENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS site (<http://www.universalstudios.com/tv/kena>). This address is jam-packed—a comprehensive overview of the show, episode guide, character and actor bios, a complete station list, KENA merchandise, a NetForum, even an interactive on-line game to download! Conspicuously absent: sound and video clips, animated graphics. Not enough photos of O'Connor, either. For a peek at O'Connor's personal scrapbook—featuring her baby pictures, high school year-book photos and glamorous pics from recent years—check out the Renee O'Connor Official Fan Club Home Page (<http://rampages.on-ramp.net/~rorweb>). This site also features updates on convention appearances, interviews and all the latest news. Universal site ★ ★ ★; Renee O'Connor Official Fan Club ★ ★

BETTIE PAGE

There are hundreds of fan sites on the web dedicated to the Queen of Curves. My favorite is The Bettie Page (<http://www.grl.com/betty.html>), the official site of Bettie look-alike Bonnie J. Burton, who writes the cyberzine *Grrl*. Burton is such a well-known personality among Bettie Page fans that this site is really as close to "of-

Loretta McCasas, a direct-to-video diva, has been featured in the likes of *CYBERZONE*, *VIRTUAL DOLLS*, *LAP DANCING*, et al. "Back at Myrtle Beach, I supported myself as just wet T-shirts and bikini contests." Some habits are hard to break!





Behind-the-scenes Linnea Quigley poses for the unproduced TANTALIZER. She turned into a horror icon with FETTER OF THE LIVING DEAD II, with Jewel Shepard, but was mismanaged. Quigley deserves a better site.

ficial" as there is at this time. It's got some nice animated graphics, news, and lots of photos, but it's Burton's sense of fun that really makes this address something special. ★ ★ ★

Michelle Pfeiffer

The Original Michelle Pfeiffer Home Page (<http://www.dannyland.org/~dawn/>) offers sound and video clips,

a complete filmography, Fun Facts, and the best biography I've found on this stunning actress. Webmaster Dave Hoffman has loaded Pfeiffer's bio with plenty of interesting data, including the fact that Pfeiffer was briefly involved with a cult that preached the virtues of vegetarianism. Pfeiffer is indirectly quoted as saying she "was the school bully, the one other kids would come to if they wanted someone beaten up." The one thing this site lacks

is photographs of Ms. Pfeiffer. To see over 60 glamorous pictures, I suggest you tap into the Michelle Pfeiffer Home Page at <http://www.geocities.com/Paris/1032/index3.html>. The Original Michelle Pfeiffer Home Page ★ ★ ★, The Michelle Pfeiffer Home Page ★ ★

Ingrid Pitt

Jack into The Pit of Horror (<http://www.webworld.co.uk/mall/PittOfHorror/>) for

a wealth of knowledge on former Hammer Films' actress Ingrid Pitt (VAMPIRE LOVERS, HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD, WICKER MAN, etc.) Maintained by Countess Dracula herself, the site offers Pitt's pithy stories. An excerpt: "When I left Buenos Aires 30 years ago, it was just ahead of a police squad. There was a revolution and I had the wrong friends." There's also merchandise, a schedule of appearances, news, and fan club info. ★ ★

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

I was disappointed to discover precious few web sites devoted to my favorite scream queen. If anyone should have her own official home page, it's Linnea Quigley. Up until recently, the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) offered a sound clip of Quigley's scream from *THE GUY-VER*, supposedly the longest recorded scream in B-movie history. Alas, when last I checked, the link was dead—more than a sexually active teen in a slasher flick. Consolation prize: Scream Queens (<http://www.handsontime.com/LINNEA.html>) offers some nice pictures of Quigley, as well as a bio and merchandising info. ★ ★

WIRE REED

Kiradance (kiradance.com) is Kira Reed's official fan club site. New to the World Wide Web as of March '98, Ms. Reed packs her home page with pictures, but offers very little insight into what's on her mind. I would have liked to have seen a bio, maybe some remembrances from her films. This site is still young, and I remain hopeful it will mature into something a little more substantial. ★ ★

CYNTHIA ROTHROCK

Webmaster "Tigger" has compiled The Unofficial Cynthia Rothrock Home Page (<http://www.interlog.com/~tigger/rothrock.html>), dedicated to the "Queen of B-Movie Kung-Fu." A few nice pictures, filmography, links (most of them dead when I tried), and a scholarly paper on gender bending in the kung-fu film. ★ ★

JERI RYAN

Chi, Evan & Cathy's Jeri Ryan Page (<http://members.xoom.com/jeriryan/jeri.html>) has almost everything



Erotic thriller diva.
Kira Reed (*F112*).
"Island Inquest" in
the Mediterranean ("I
was taking my top off
and flirting around.
Take your shirt off over
here & people think
you're crazy"). The
starlet, whose roles
include a vampire &
"a slasher Scotty"
(*THE SEX FILES*), is
best in cyberspace.



Twice a 77 centerfold, indie siren/genre Tiffany Shepis (PHASPOD HORNS, HEAVY BLACK SMOKESTACKS) has moved from N.Y. to L.A. "I want to do three Size that folks will remember 20 years from now." Is her site equally memorable?

a Seven of Nine fan could want from a web site, except for a listing of Ryan's home phone number. Interviews, loads of pictures, chat room, message board, links. There's also audio and video clips, though every time I tried to play a video called "Voyager '98," my whole system crashed. Would have liked to have seen a bio, too. Additional points off for poor spelling. ★★

Susan Sarandon

Chris Baker's Susan Sa-

randon Site (<http://www.ultimatefan.com/uk/sarandon/index.htm>) is a nice fan page from across the Big Pond. Features bio, filmography (talk about versatility—contrast THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK with DEAD MAN WALKING or LORENZO OIL), links, sound clips, and three photo galleries. As webmaster Baker says, "Why Susan Sarandon? Forget the pneumatic hump on an IQ to match their chest size—and I'm not talking metric! Susan Sarandon is the real thing, a proper actress, and sex on a stick!" ★★★

Tracy Scoggins

Tracy Scoggin's Official Homepage (<http://celebrity-network.com/actors/tracyscoggins/index.html>) is the last word on the babe from BABYLON 5. Complete bio and filmography (genre films include ALIEN INTRUDER, WATCHERS II and DEMONIC TOYS), photo gallery, BABYLON 5 info and trivia factoids on the first actor to have three television series running on the same network at the same time. ★★★

Tiffany Shepis

The Tiffany Shepis Fan Club (<http://www.tiac.net/user/tanok/stars/tiffany.htm>) offers some provocative pics of this Troma Films actress. A note to webmaster Bruce: there's more to Tiffany Shepis than just a great body. How about some interviews or biographical info? ★

Marina Sirtis

There's a reason the Marina Sirtis Homepage '98 (<http://www.netnarc.fi/~tomnph/thenite/55towards.htm>) has won multiple awards. Finnish webmaster Tommi Hiron has assembled over 50 glamorous photos of Sirtis like you've never seen her before. There's also tons of video and audio clips (my favorite: "Chocolate is a serious thing"), extensive bios for both Sirtis and her STAR TREK: TNG character Deanna Troi, interviews, a complete filmography (did you know she was in CALIGULA?) and sodas more. Delicious! ★★★

Julie K. Smith

Ms. Smith opens her Official Home Page (<http://www97.com/jsmith>) with this charming message: "Hi, I'm Julie K. Smith and welcome to my personal web site. After you're done viewing my photos, remember to clean your stain." This is followed by her bio. An excerpt: "I went to a private Catholic school and saw no boys!! I was a young rebel, and got spanked on the knuckles with a ruler many a time!! I used to masturbate in the bathroom, and I got caught for hiding condoms in Mrs. Norvell's China dish on her desk. I used to get in trouble for making farting noises in class." Hey, nobody said she's a class act. Lots of pictures of silicone here. For the really naughty stuff, you have to pay \$15 a month to become a member. That's where all the

fun in: audio and video interviews, chat room, interactive arcade, video clips. Whatever does it for you, baby. ★★

BRINKE STEVENS

Brinke Stevens' Fan Club Home Page (<http://web.jad.com/~brinke/index.html>) offers some fun collectibles (including an R-rated screen saver and her vampire pastor). The site, dedicated to FF's first "cover girl," also includes a schedule of appearances, news updates, filmography, and links. What this site really needs is some photos and an audio clip of Brinke's sexy, husky voice. ★★

SHARON STONE

French-speaking webmaster "Phil" has created a respectful little fan site dedicated to Sharon Stone (<http://www.myguide.org/01/wilybird/Sharon/index.html>). There's an interesting bio here (in English), lots of photos and links. Stone reportedly has an IQ of 165, and I would have liked to have seen some interviews on this site. ★★

Sharon Stone (7/2), former B-starlet (ACTION JACKSON), waxes in eyespies. Fans would prefer more catty documentation of her high IQ.



Brinke Stevens earned cult insanity via her choice of roles: Viva (SQUADRY BABES IN THE SLIMEBALL BOWL-A-RAMA, BAD GIRLS FROM MARY). As a FF staffer, she wrote "Vampire: Alternate Lifestyles" (ET). Check out her web site!

VAMPIRELLA

FEMALIEN actress Vanessa Taylor has stepped into the world wide web arena with her own Official Home Page (<http://www.cnt.com/users/new/vt.html>). Here you'll find a bio, pics, and fan club info. Taylor's sweet personality shines throughout. ★★

Uma Thurman

Billed as the "oldest Uma Thurman web site still in existence," The Amazing Uma Thurman Site (<http://www.duke.edu/~x12/uma/index.html>) has received accolades from both CNN and YAHOO INTERNET LIFE. The site is updated regularly with new photos and news—Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke are expecting their first child, etc., etc.? The bio as interesting and includes photos of Thurman from kindergarten and first grade. An excerpt: "My father was the first American to be ordained as a Buddhist monk and is regarded as this country's foremost authority on Buddhism. When the Dalai Lama comes to America, it's my father who is his host." Normally, there

BATMAN & NOIR was pinned, but Uma Thurman (54) liked to "suck on banana." Her site gets a better review.



Probably covered in IT? (4.5, 5.5 & 6.0), comic book heroine Vampirella has leapt into other mediums, most with a TV movie & a "bloody good" web site.

are over 100 images of Thurman available, but the last time I checked, two of the three photo galleries were under construction. ★★ ★

SHANNON TWEED

It's no shocker that most of the web sites dedicated to Playboy Playmate of the Year ('82) Shannon Tweed are X-rated. The best of the "clean" sites is Playboy Playmate Shannon Tweed (http://www.otaku.net/kiss/otaku/photo_gallery/otakuphotos/RochVallancourt/shandoughs/hannon.html), and that's not saying much. There's some nice quotes here from Tweed, hubby rock star Gene Simmons, and former flame Hugh Hefner, but there are very few photos. Can't we find a middle ground, people? Tweed has made over 50

movies and television appearances, and yet this site offers no filmography. Personally, I'd love to see Ms. Tweed create her own official site. ★

VAMPIRELLA

In the vein of vampire comic book heroines, VAMPIRELLA is the scream of the creep. That's why it's astounding to realize that Vampi publisher Harris Comics' doesn't have a web site to call its own. Harris' Seth Biederman, head of Retail Promotions, suggests you jack into <http://www.sbs.net/~scorpion/vampirella.html>. Maintained by an "unusually obsessed" fan named Scott, the site offers a handful of Vampi images and a review of the Vampirella movie by Jim

Wynorski (but no film clips). There's also info on joining Vampirella's Scarlet Legion fan club. To be honest, I was much more impressed with a Vampirella fan site located at <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Lofts/3340/index.html>. The site's webmaster is a member of Vampi's Scarlet Legion, and his love for the lady in red really shows. He's got 25 related links and 37 Vampi images, as well as some nice animated graphics. Bloody good! Scott's site ★; Geocities' site ★★

Nana Visitor

There's certainly no dearth of sites on the web devoted to the gal who plays Major Kira Nerys on STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE. Nanites: The Official Nana Visitor Fan Club (<http://www.nanites.com/>) offers the latest news, including pics of Visitor at the Star Trek conventions and the new Trek exhibit at the Las Vegas Hilton. Membership info, too. The Nana Visitor Home Page (<http://kira.scomp.usf.edu/>) is another good fan site. Here you'll find a large selection of Visitor photos, both in and out of her alien makeup. Note the bio hasn't been updated in three years, and doesn't include Visitor's marriage to co-star Alexander Siddig and the birth of their child. Also, the sound clips didn't work when I tried. Nanites: The Official Nana Visitor Fan Club ★★, The Nana Visitor Home Page ★★

SIGOURNEY WEAVER

The Unofficial Sigourney Weaver Page (<http://www.uni-c.dtu.dk/~unikem/Sigourney/>), maintained by Kim Madsen, is the best place to go for information on this talented and versatile actress. There's a nice bio (the most concise I've found), filmography, links, and 168 photos. ★★ ★





Pressing for Dianne
Feices, genre bomb-
shell Vanessa Taylor
(FERNALD) literally
cooks as a juicy
jungle vixen. Her la-
test role? As one of
Full Moon's BLOOD
DOLLS. She's incredi-
bly on the Internet.

BLACK MASK

FRANCOISE YIP

JUICY AS JACKIE CHAN'S DECORATIVE DIVA, SHE'S HONG KONG'S OUTSPOKEN CULT QUEEN: SCOTCHING THE ASIAN STEREOTYPES.

By CRAIG REID

What's so cool about conversing with Asian starlets is that they're so bereft of Hollywood and attitude. I mean, "power lunch" platitudes take a back seat to a Gary Cooper-type recapitulation of their work ("Just doin' my job"). Discreetly dynamic. Case in point, to paraphrase Rod Serling, is Francoise Yip. She was introduced to global audiences as a domineering, Chinese gangland go-go dancer, who speeds a motorcycle just north of Jackie Chan's private parts in **RUMBLE IN THE BRONX**. Chan narrowly kept his family jewels intact by diving headfirst through a Mercedes sunroof and splitting his legs like a wishbone as Yip accelerated her chopper between hooh limbs. And in her current release, Tezi Hark's **BLACK MASK**, Yip is clad in leather, fishnet and chains as a "screw-em before you kill-em" rifle-toting dominatrix. At the height of her ecstasy, she slashes her latest john's throat, rockets 30 feet across a banger and bicycle-kicks her legs with enough impact to knock Jet Li, Hong Kong's #2 boxoffice



BLACK MASK Francoise Yip as You-Kuh-sha, a sadistic exponent of a criminal organization. "My costume was rubber. It was in July & over 90 degrees. The wig was heavy!"

wonderboy, into pseudo-chivvies.

Yip's reaction? "Well, I've never trained in martial arts," she shrugs. "And I don't know how to fight, can't dance, don't speak Chinese and I have never ridden a motorcycle. But for these tougher parts—for example, the harder motorcycle stunts—a good friend of mine was doubling for me. If I had tried to do some of the more dangerous stuff, I might have damaged myself. Although, in **BLACK MASK**, fight director Yuen Woo Ping boosted me in the

air in a harness, and I flew around doing all that kicking and stuff."

It's ironic that in Hong Kong's male-dominated culture, where women's societal roles are trivialized, films depict femmes as the ultimate extroverts: rebellious, unpredictable, cunning. Yip, the embodiment of the Asian femme fatale, doesn't adhere to the Hong Kong lifestyle nor Tinseltown pretension. "I was born in Vancouver, British Columbia," she explains. "My father is Chinese and my mother French, but my

family has been in Canada since the 1880s. I speak French, English and now—since working over in Hong Kong—a little bit of Cantonese Chinese. It's tough learning the language over there, because you can get by with English and that makes you lazy."

As a toddler, Yip trained in dancing but her aptitude for piano-playing earned her numerous awards at musical competitions. So why did she pass on an opportunity to study music full-time? "I attended the Simon Fraser University in Vancouver because, in high school, I was majoring in French, history and political science and it was political science that I wanted to pursue. You see, I wanted to travel and get paid for doing that and be able to travel for long periods of time—not being an airline stewardess but to work in a consulate and be stationed somewhere overseas for a couple of years. I'm just interested in going and living with different people."

During her years at the university, at the persistence of a friend, Yip leaned on modeling but her attachment to the profession was



Tip is WILD: "In that film, I played a woman wanting to get out of China. When I do, I meet up with criminal types." She says her time won't be branded with an "adult" rating. "But if I do something like that, I'd rather do it for more than just taking my shirt off."



Yip takes a bead on Lee Ching Wen in **BLACK MASK**. "To do something like this [violent] character is exciting because you suffer no consequences. You can let loose in this type of film." **B.** As a rubber who's INFATUATION with her boss, prompted by a 1-night stand, does inconceivable gruesome consequences.

short-lived. "With modeling, I started getting paid lots of money for not very much work and obviously got to do a lot of travelling. So, in a sense, I was still fulfilling my dream. But modeling was merely a transition because I found it to be very two-dimensional. I never really had any aspirations to do films when I was growing up, but, now that I have found it, I can't imagine doing anything else."

Cast as a leading lady, Yip debuted in a film that broke boxoffice records in Asia and, for two weeks, was the #1 grossing film in America: "I was going to all these auditions. Late one night, I got a call for this film that was looking for a Chinese woman who speaks Chinese, can dance and ride a motorcycle. I could do none of that, and so my agent told me to not bother going. But the casting agency insisted I at least try. Next thing I know, two days later, I'm on the set

filming **RUMBLE IN THE BRONX** with Jackie Chan. He's actually really great to work with. I love his film, **DRUNKEN MASTER II**."

Yours truly impulsively recounts, "I was on set of that film in Hong Kong, learning fight choreography from Jackie and his crew."

"Wow, that is such a cool film," grins Yip.

"You got that right," I reply. "It's the best kung fu film ever made, over 40 minutes of the best fighting I've seen. It took Jackie three months to film that final sixteen-minute sequence. I think New Line screwed up by not distributing it. It earned something like \$24 million in Asia in four days."

"I was nervous to meet [Chan] because he's quite serious," says Yip. "But when you get to know him, he's really funny, friendly and he'll get you anything you want. And when you see him on set, you know why he's special and down to earth. One day, we had to



blow something up, didn't have much time left and had to clean up this mess for another take. Jackie jumped in and said, 'Okay, let's go!' He picked up a broom and started cleaning up the set. The Vancouver crew is like 'What?' No one has ever seen a big star clean up a mess."

I ponder why Hong Kong actresses and filmmakers are not encumbered with the egocentric psyche that plagues their L.A. counterparts. There's no surfeit of food and drink doled out for a personal palate, everyone works 16-18 hours a day for peanuts, there's no griping and even Jackie Chan declines a trailer. As a fight director developing my apprenticeship with MARTIAL LAW's Hong Kong crew, I've seen the series' action director, Yuen Tak, cleaning-up and switching the set around. But then, go figure, I deflate my thought balloon and recall Yip's predatory persona in RUMBLE IN THE BRONX clad in a constrictive, one-piece, feline number, she dances in a cage with a tiger. "Yep," shrugs Yip. "I sat in that cage for 12 hours with a tiger roaming around me. They had two tigers. They have short attention spans. They got excited and do their thing for about 15 minutes, then they'd trade-off; otherwise, they got bored and not do anything."

"You can't see it in the film, but they had this five-pound piece of meat at the tip of the cage so the tiger would jump up on top of the cage with its claws. I'd look up and see this piece of bloody meat dripping all over me. It was a double cage, so I was in one cage and the tiger in the other; however, the bars weren't that tight together so I had to keep my distance. The tigers look cute and gentle, but then you look at their paws and think that one playful swat could take a man's face off."

Though she demonstrated her martial arts skills in a pool table scene, Yip ad-

"It's great to be cast as a powerful bitch rather than the plumblossom, subservient, stereotypical Oriental lady. It's time for tough, kick-butt Asian women."



INFATUATION ('84), adapted from a true story. Yip, cast as obsessed employee, screened an interview with one of her counterpart's real-life victims ("Mind").

mits her RUMBLE role "was just mostly decoration. With the motorcycle escapade, we did wheelies and there was this thing set up to raise the front wheel up. I had only ridden a few times, so I kind of panicked and I was going for the clutch and smashed into the side of a car. They checked me for a concussion but I was working the next day. Big dent in

the car, though."

As a result of RUMBLE's commercial prosperity, Yip turned into a bankable celebrity at the Hong Kong boxoffice. She was subsequently cast in WILD, followed by a sequel to Jackie Chan's LUCKY STARS franchise. And then there was INFATUATION, ostensibly a rip-off of BASIC INSTINCT though the film

was based upon a true incident: after a one night stand with her boss, Yip's character stalks her temporary lover and is jealously driven to spray acid in his wife's face. "What was weird about this," relates Yip, "is I saw an interview with the real-life wife on TV after we'd finished the film—and I'm like, 'Wow, that's the real woman my character did this to!' [pause] I next did WILD, where I play a woman wanting to get out of China. When I do, I meet up with these criminal types. I fall in love with one of them and then I'm on the run from the police."

When queried if any of the films qualified for Hong Kong's Category III (adults only, 18 years or older), Yip emphatically blurts, "No. I've been asked to, but if I am going to do something like that, I would rather do it for more than just taking my shirt off or just for gratuitous stuff."

"The challenge for doing films in Hong Kong is that I've never had acting classes. Sure, I'm working a lot but I've no time for them, and it's not like there are schools where you can take courses over there. There's one academy for acting, a two-year program. I learned a lot on set, so it's more like being an apprentice. Now that I have classes, I can look back, apply it and recall why something did or didn't work. But because budgets are less in Hong Kong, it's not like here in America where everything is done for you and people wait on you hand and foot. Over there, it's a job—you do everything, and you do anything to get the job done. I learned to do a lot myself. It's more grounding than having to just be in this space, where you're only going on in your little world and you don't know what's happening anywhere else."

So whatever prompted Yip's casting in BLACK MAGIC, which had been produced three years ago? "A lot of times [in Hong Kong], when you've done

films, you don't really audition. People just approach you, talk about the schedule and you agree to do the film. **RUMBLE IN THE BRONX** is the only thing I've ever auditioned for. I know some actresses would like that. On one hand, you work much harder over there; no place to rest, a couple of minutes to eat, it's not as cushy as in America. But, at the same time, you get lay about auditioning because you don't have to.

"I wanted to do **BLACK MASK** because I wanted to work with Jet Li, and I was going to do some real, big action fights. **INFATUATION** and **WILD** were the sexy, femme fatale thing but now I was going to top that. I didn't want to be stereotyped, doing that kind of film and character."

American directors have tried to stylistically clone the kinetic, baroque panache of fast-Asia films. Sample **UNIVERSAL SOLDIER** and **SOLDIER**: the glitzy visual appeal is roughly approximated, but the results are akin to an inebriated brother-in-law imitating Sinatra. It's like comparing sharks to guppies. If you're looking for the film that **BATMAN & ROBIN** should have been, look no further than Daniel Lee's **BLACK MASK**. Cashing in on Jet Li's U.S. debut in **LETHAL WEAPON 4**, Artisan Entertainment is releasing a 95 minute, English-dubbed version of Lee's 1996 film. Li's character, Tsui Chik, is a hybridization of 007, Roger Moore's Saint, and Bruce Lee's Kato. Adhering to the "cloak and dagger" genre, the soundtrack resonates with a chintzy brass melody that evokes **THE AVENGERS** and **SECRET AGENT MAN**.

Chik was part of the 701 squad, an elite group of Chinese assassins whose physical and emotional sensations have been desensitized as a result of brain surgery.



P. Yip in WILD. "The challenge for doing films in Hong Kong is that I've never had acting classes. Over there, it's a job you do everything and you do anything to get the job done. I learned to do a lot myself & to be silent. It's not like here, where everything is done for you." **B. INFATUATION.** Her character's mesmerization turns into mayhem.



Assuming the identity of mild-mannered librarian, Shik escapes from 701's headquarters in mainland China and attempts to live a normal life in Hong Kong. But under the leadership of Commander Hung, 701 is bent on conquering Hong Kong by slaughtering the police and usurping the drug trade. Only Chik's al-

ter ego—Black Mask—has developed the sort of a contentious demeanor, externalized by lethal combative skills, that can rescue Hong Kong from a criminal despot. Battling the 701 squad, Black Mask rages over his inability to experience love for colleague Tracy (Karen Mok) and 701 expatriate Yeuk-lan (Yip), a

bomb-shell in black leather.

In a rare interview, director Daniel Lee exclusively shares with us the genesis of **BLACK MASK** and Li's homage to an Asian icon. "We all like Bruce Lee," explains Lee. "I've heard Tsui Hark, the producer, wrote the script five years before any of his **ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA** films. There have been more than ten scriptwriters and five directors attached to the project. We also worked on the script one half a year before filming. The Black Mask resembled Bruce Lee's Kato, but, in close-up, the mask is wrinkled like a fan. Tsui invented the mask's design from a dream he had about an opening fan. If you don't have those stripes on the mask, it's too much like Kato."

Lee had worked in television until he was hired as assistant director on **THE ROMANCE OF THE SWORD AND BOOK**, a period epic directed by Ann Hui, one of the few female directors in Hong Kong's film industry. Lee also served as an art director on Brigitte Lin's **STARRY NIGHT**.

"I love doing action films," smiles Lee, "so in 1992, I returned to TV and shot my first film, **MYSTERY OF THE CONDOR**, which earned me the Gold Medal in international TV programming at the New York Film Festival. Back then, whenever you did action, actors asked, 'Oh, which style of action are you doing, Tsui Hark or Ching Sin Tung?' I told them that this was my own style and Tsui found that style interesting, quite experimental and documentary-like. He asked me to direct his sleuth film **WONG FEI HUNG: THE ASSASSIN'S**, a spin-off from his film series."

The spin-offs proved more abstract than the films, which had already applied hyperbole to the ac-

tism. In one scene, a horse plunges toward the hero, who turns around and—with a single punch—literally sends the beast flying backwards (via a wired stunt rigging). It's the milieu of a POPEYE cartoon.

Yip initially appears in *BLACK MASK* attired in chains and tight leather. Seducing a drug dealer, she subversively severs his inards to paint the floor red. She next maniacally attacks Jet Li with flying, pumping kicks. It's a far cry from her comparatively less archaic character in *RUMBLE IN THE BRONX*.

So why was Yip cast as the bloodthirsty vixen? "First of all, her appearance," explains Lee. "She is tall, half-Chinese and half-French. I found her quietly interesting and her appearance is quietly athletic-looking. She doesn't practice martial arts but she dared to try anything. Jet Li has that perfect 'Oriental people' look. I mean, a lot of Chinese actors look a little foreign and not quite Chinese-looking. But Jet has that 100% Northern Chinese look. For the chemistry, I wanted a leading lady that didn't have that typical 'Chinese person' look, a French-Chinese mix was refreshing and gave a better dynamic to the film, as well as to the 701 squad which was more global looking than just all being perfect-looking Asians."

Yip recalls "that in the simulated sex scene, I'm dressed as a dominatrix lady because that is how she can get in to kill that guy [Anthony Wong]. But she's an assassin. People have a lot of different things inside them, and to be able to do something like this character is exciting because you suffer no consequences for doing it. You can let loose in this type of film."

"But, ooooh...my costume was rubber. It was in July, in the 90s and so hot. Plus that wig was just so itchy. The rubber pretty much sticks to you like a suction cup on your skin, and I had

"Toward the end of the shoot, we made jokes about the film. We begged the director, 'Could we find a locale that isn't stinky, hot, smelly, gross and not at night?'"



Yip & Lau Chang-ling in *BLACK MASK*, adapted from a Hong Kong comic strip. "The fight director had us hoisted in the air up to about 20 feet in a harness."

to wear that for about 10 days. We made jokes about the film towards the end, begging the director, 'Could we find a location that isn't stinky, smelly, hot and gross and not at night?' Every location we had were construction sites and train tracks. We had this one intense fight on a roof; we were on the top of a land factory and it stunk. I fought in dirt, took breaks in dirt and lived in dirt for five days."

Based on a famous Hong Kong comic strip, *BLACK MASK* is a cinematic epiphany of unbridled mayhem and schizophrenia, compliments of action director Yuen Woo Ping, who served as the stunt coordinator on *THE MATRIX* and contributed to Jackie Chan's film legacy, what with *SNAKE IN THE EAGLE'S SHADOW* and *DRUNKEN MASTER*.

"Ah yes, the training and fighting and wire stunts," grins Yip. "I spent a lot of time with the stunt guys, two of whom trained me. Yuen Woo Ping is a master of that stuff, he's quite amazing and I'm sure *THE*

MATRIX will be awesome. Dean Cain was fight choreographer. I spent a couple of hours a day training tricks, kicks and different punches...just enough so I could basically do a sequence without worrying about it. But it's like breathing for them! I never trained before, lessons were hard. I'd get home, get in the bathtub and go, 'Aaaaaahhhhh' I'd be in pain after one hour, and these guys go all day. I did a lot of wire stuff, they put me in this harness which is like a big iron diaper; they wouldn't fly me higher than 20 feet."

"It was very physically challenging and the film was mainly shot at night. The gun I shot in the hospital scene was real and very heavy, it was a bit difficult holding my arm out straight for so long and shooting it. But the underground cat-catch finale fight was tough, we were just wading around in muddy waters a lot."

Shortly after wrapping *BLACK MASK*, Yip returned to Canada and resumed work on Ernest Dickerson's *FUTURESPO*

with Wesley Snipes and Vanessa Williams. She is currently functioning as producer and leading lady on *FLESH AND BLOOD*, an urban drama currently in pre-production. Recent assignments include a guest-starring role on an episode of *EARTH: FINAL FRONTIER*. "Again, I was a powerful bitch on that. Yes, it does sound like I'm being typecast but I don't mind. It's great to be cast in that kind of role rather than to be the plum-blossom, subservient, stereotypical Oriental woman. But now with Michelle Yeoh from *TOMORROW NEVER DIES* and Lucy (Alexis Lee) from *PAYBACK*, it's about time that these tough kick-butt Asian women are coming in to the limelight."

I conclude our interview by asking Yip if she's particularly impassioned about something related—or unrelated—to her profession. "I hadn't thought about it," she says. "But I think it would have to be about racism. Growing up as a mix, I never really experienced too many problems in my family or with racial slurs or thought about how someone is, based on how they looked. Later on, however, people can say things. But you know what I say to those people? 'In a hundred years, you are all going to look like me, anyway!' I mean one in four people in the world are Chinese so—(laughing)—everyone is going to have my tone of skin and a bit of slanted eyes, eventually."

"Strangely though, in Hong Kong, you can feel people staring at you. It's not mean-spirited, and no one said anything to offend me. But you can feel it. It doesn't matter how well you speak the language or how long you are there: you are never quite the same as if you grew up there and being from there. In Hong Kong, I'm not one of them...and in Canada, I'm not one of them either. So there isn't a complete feeling of acceptance at either place."

BLACK MASK KAREN MOK

ROCK, NUDITY, MTV. PROFILE OF THE ASSERTIVE ACTRESS/SINGER. PET PEEVE: BIGOTRY (DON'T EVEN ASK ABOUT CANTOPOP).

BY DAISY & MILES WOOD

Her spanking new MTV video was broadcast earlier today and, during the past hour, Karen Mok Man-wai has been fielding questions from local newspaper reporters and television interviewers. The video's debut ties in with the imminent release of *KING OF COMEDY*, a vehicle for Stephen Chiu who's regionally the #1 comic actor and second only to Jackie Chan as the top boxoffice draw. The event is officiated in the Tsim Sha Tsui branch of HMV, which—hereof of publicity—draws a few curious onlookers, but, thankfully, no swarms of screaming fans.

As usual, most of Hong Kong's press sustain less interest in Mok's increasingly impressive body of work—which exceeds only the film medium—than the rumors surrounding her apparent, long-standing relationship with Chiu. "It's part of the job," she acknowledges. To make Mok feel at ease, I enlighten her to the likelihood that *French Fatales* readers in the West may be unfamiliar with her background and all the gossip; hence, she need not worry about this interview delving too deeply into her personal affairs.

Whenever her film cred-



BLACK MASK Karen Mok is embroiled in a delicate conspiracy. "I'm supposed to be the comedy relief. We shot in high summer, and I got sunbaked all over!"

its are Anglicized for English-speaking markets, the actress' name is routinely abbreviated to Karen Mok. "I was born Karen Joy Morris," she explains sans accent. "My grandfather was Welsh. But as far as work is concerned, I should be identified as) Karen Mok. Mok, of course, is derived from my Chinese name so it's just simpler that way." Mok, in fact, spent most of her life in her native Hong Kong; but by the time she matured into her late teens, the aspirant actress "had a good time" in Europe.

"When I was 17, I went to Italy for two years," Mok recounts. "I won a scholarship

to study at an international school, just basic college stuff—and then onto London where I continued my Italian studies." During our conversation, Mok wistfully hints that her time in the U.K. was more memorable for social rather than academic reasons. She gave herself time for fun, perhaps speculating such a luxury would be eclipsed later in her professional life.

"Ever since I was a kid," recalls Mok, "I always knew I would like to be involved with the performing arts somehow, be it on stage or whatever. When I was in London, I actually auditioned for *Miss Saigon* in

the West End, but, in the end, I decided to come back to Hong Kong. I thought it would be easier here, that there would be more opportunities for Orientals in this part of the world rather than in London."

Mok initially breached Hong Kong's entertainment industry by cutting "a Cantonese album with Star Records. It was still in the middle of my studies though and, after a few months, I had to go back to London to finish them. I had stopped for a year off. And then when I returned from London, I somehow got into movies and just kept going. For a few months, I first hosted a music show for teenagers on television. I was doing all sorts of strange things!"

She made her film debut in *FAMILY AFFAIRS*, though Mok has little to say about the 1994 release other than conceding, "It was okay" and admitting, "It's good, in a way, not to be thrown into the deep end." End of story.

Her next assignment, however, could hardly have been more high profile. Supporting Stephen Chiu, the fledgling actress co-starred in *A CHINESE ODYSSEY*, an epic released in two parts. While her creaking fu-



"I think when [Westerners] cast for movies, they want someone who's stereotypically Chinese and they actually want them to speak with a Chinese accent."

aled rumors that Mok was Chau's new girlfriend—Hong Kong's scandal-hungry press promptly linked the couple in a romantic capacity—she offers no such explanation for landing the role: "I just got a phone call one day. And that was it. Producers are always on the lookout for fresh faces, rather than using the same people over and over again. And as I'd only released one CD, which didn't really do very well, I guess I fit the bill."

"It was a lucky break for me, and it was great fun to film in China. It's better to go off to somewhere remote and do a movie, rather than just stay here [in Hong Kong] and shoot several other movies at the same time [a practice not uncommon in HK]. The assembly-line mode

of filmmaking was launched a few years ago when there was a desperate need for surplus of films to fill theatres]. By shooting a single film, you got more focussed. A CHINESE ODYSSEY is based on some Chinese myths, but it's not what they were about, we just used the characters to develop into some sort of story."

Considering the scale of the production, it would not be surprising for a newcomer to be overwhelmed by the whole experience, but Mok took things pretty much in her stride. "I've always enjoyed acting, and did a lot of stage stuff when I was at school. So, even though I'd not done film work before, I was okay."

Mok subsequently made a couple of films for UFO, a

"Tsui Hark, producer of BLACK MASK, wasn't always in Hong Kong. He'd [later] change stuff, we'd had to reshoot things and everybody got really confused."

company organized by Peter Chan that specialized in up-market movies (Chan is currently in Hollywood, directing his first film for producer Steven Spielberg). Cast in HEAVEN CAN'T WAIT, Mok appeared to have gone beyond the line of duty by shaving her head for the film's dramatic finale. "Actually, I had already shaved my head before I started working on the film," she reveals. "So I was wearing a wig for most of the picture and director [Lee Che-nip] said, 'Well, we shouldn't waste your skinhead, we must show it at some point in the movie.'"

Mok's next role introduced her not only to Western aficionados of Hong Kong films, but patrons of U.S. and European art houses. *FALLEN ANGELS*, Wong Kar-wai's follow-up to his international hit *CHUNGKING EXPRESS*, brought Mok some marginal celebrity. The film's Hong Kong hits promoted Leon Lai as the star; however, in Japan, it was Mok's image that was reproduced on movie posters.

"That was a lucky break

as well," insists the actress, "because Wong Kar-wai initially offered me a tiny guest part in the movie and, of course, I didn't mind because it was something new. So I thought, 'Why not?' But he always has new ideas and makes changes and he developed the part into something quite distinctive."

Distinctive is an apt choice of word. Her work in other films notwithstanding—including installments of the *YOUNG AND DANGEROUS* series—Mok left such an indelible impression as one of the *FALLEN ANGELS* that the public often identified her real-life persona with the wild and kooky screen character.

"Well, I could do things like that," she laughs, "and I guess that's the impression most people do get of me. But, actually, I'm never myself in any of the movies I've done...though, in certain ways, all the characters I've played are reflective of myself. But then I guess that applies to most actors. I do think people tend to believe that I'm odd because I always end up with roles that

Jet Li conceals his *BLACK MASK* alter ego from co-worker Mok. "We had too many changes while shooting. It just got dragged on and on," says the actress.



have quirky sides to them. I don't think I'm ever really considered for the girl-next-door type character...but I don't mind that, actually."

But Mok doesn't deny that she was generously given quite a bit of freedom when essaying the role. "I don't think much of Wong kar-wai's stuff is ever very 'scripted.' Of course, he has guidelines and things he would like you to stick to, but then you can certainly improvise a lot on top of that. Some people get intimidated by him because you never quite know what you're going to be doing when you arrive on set, but I felt quite at ease."

Mok swung from Hong Kong's avant-garde style of filmmaking (though she describes *FALLEN ANGELS* as "one of Wong kar-wai's more commercial films") to the mainstream. She mouthed expletives, replete with a Cockney accent, in *YOUNG AND DANGEROUS 3*. She was also cast as a police gun instructor in *BEST OF THE BEST*. "I was offered the parts and they were something I'd not done before. And I like playing with guns," she explains matter-of-factly.

Reversing herself again, Mok approved relatively diminutive roles in decidedly non-commercial movies like *FOUR FACES OF EVE* (1996), *KITCHEN* and *VIVA EROTICA*. Her choices were partially attributable to collaborating with each film's lauded director: "*FOUR FACES* was fun. The idea of not having any language—we're speaking, but just gibberish—was cool but it's not easy. You'd think it would be not having to learn any lines, but, in fact, it's quite tough. And it's just so much fun to work with actor Eric Kot, he's hilarious! That was the first time I worked with him, and I guess he must have wanted to work with me again as well, because he cast me in his own film, *FIRST LOVE: LITTER ON THE BREEZE* (1997). Eric starred in the film and directed it, too. He's very

"Jet Li, cast as BLACK MASK, joked with the stuntmen but he's very shy with women. When he finally got in the mood to talk, he'd go on forever. A nice guy!"



The Hong Kong press presumes that Mok and Stephen Chow, starting in *KING OF COMEDY* (top) are "intimate" off-screen. "I play this actor's spouse, a female version of Chow 'Yau-tai' Ji. Cast as Tracy, she blithely stole *BLACK MASK*."



unpredictable, and he doesn't always follow the script and often just does whatever comes into his mind!"

Although it was made back in 1996, *BLACK MASK* has finally garnered a belated U.S. theatrical release, thanks to the Hollywood transplant of the film's star, Jet Li, into *LETHAL WEAPON 4*. Mok's role in the film is not the introspective stuff that she developed in *FALLEN ANGELS*. "Actually, I'm supposed to be the comic relief in the

movie," shrugs the actress.

BLACK MASK is adapted from a Hong Kong comic strip, but its narrative doesn't erode into tongue-in-cheek; on the contrary, the film is locked into a dark, adult milieu akin to Tim Burton's *BATMAN*. Packed with action, impressive stunt work and a substantive supporting cast—what with Anthony Wong (*THE UNTOLD STORY*) and Lou Ching-wan (*THE LONGEST NITE*)—the film is rousing entertainment, al-

beit with some inconsistencies in mood.

"We had too many changes when we were shooting," says Mok. "We started production in April or May and went on until October, and just dragged on and on." Compared to Hollywood shoots, which grind on indefinitely, that may sound like a less than an extravagant schedule. But keep in mind that most Hong Kong movies are wrapped in only a week or two. The primary problems stemmed from its legendary producer, Tsui Hark (*A CHINESE GHOST STORY*, *ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA*), who has a reputation of being difficult, sometimes taking the film away from a hired director, a fact that he personally validates.

"Tsui Hark was the producer but he wasn't always in Hong Kong," says Mok. "So when he came over, he'd have a look at what we'd shot and change stuff and then we had to reshoot things and everybody just got really confused. Sometimes, I didn't know what was going on. It was difficult, and we were shooting in high summer and it was so hot—I got sunburned all over!"

She did, however, enjoy working with co-star Jet Li, even if things were a little odd to begin with. "Jet Li is a very quiet guy. He doesn't speak. I think he's shy. He chats and jokes with his buddies, the stunt men, but he's very shy with women. But towards the end of shooting, he warmed up a bit and when he finally got in the mood to talk, he would go on forever! He's a nice guy."

What probably drew Mok even more attention was her decision to pose nude for the cover of her second CD release. Publicly stripping-off one's clothes in Hong Kong is a risky proposition, no matter how esthetic the intention. But it wasn't something that Mok needed much persuasion to do. "It was my idea!" she volunteers. "I always thought I'd

like to do a photo like that one day, and then I was going to release the CD. And I happened to mention it to my art director and he thought it was a brilliant idea for the CD cover."

While such a declaration of independence tallies a surplus of publicity, it's not always the sort of attention a corporate company would prefer to attract. "But the record company didn't mind. They said if I really felt like doing it, go ahead," smiles Mok. Nevertheless, a lack of conviction in her voice suggests otherwise.

One may imagine her nudity gravitating contacts from producers of the exploitation (i.e. "erotic thriller") industry. "But no one really thought of it as being pornographic," says Mok. "It was a big thing but everyone thought it was very stylish and arty. And even in Singapore, where there was debate about whether to allow such a cover to be imported, it turned out that they had okayed it."

The furor directed focus away from the content of the CD, which, in Hong Kong, "was considered very alternative. I don't just sing whatever is thrown at me. Music-wise, I try put in some of my own stuff, including such influences as Alanis Morissette and Radiohead."

As you may have already presumed, Mok is not your middle-of-the-road Cantopop singer, a mode of music for which she has little patience. "The real run-of-the-mill Cantopop is really run-of-the-mill," Mok says dismissively, though she acknowledges that "you can find some nice tunes. And even Faye Wong, who's now basically off doing her own stuff, started out in that vein."

Mok realizes she's not yet heir to Faye Wong auterism, but there are signs that she may opt to be



Mok posed in the nude for the cover of her 2nd CD release. "No one really thought of it as pornographic. It was [controversial], but everyone said it was stylish and arty."

liberated in a similar direction: "There was a song with some English lyrics which I did, but I don't write Chinese lyrics. They were all done for me. It's just as long as it's something I feel like singing and I can express myself. I have written a few English songs, though."

"And then there's another type of music that's been a big influence on me. I think I was in Italy when I started listening to standard jazz and what gets me is the way Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday deliver their material. That is how singing should be. From the heart."

Throughout 1998, Mok was entirely absent from Hong Kong screens, quite a contrast to two years earlier

when she maintained visibility in seven films released within six months. One might interpret this vanishing act to a withdrawal from an industry now on hard times, or simply circumventing a chronic case of overexposure. Mok rationalizes, a tad nervously, "I never really do anything deliberately." And the reason for her absence? "I was simply asked to record a Mandarin album. I never really calculate my moves. When I shaved my head, it was the natural thing to do after having bleached and dyed my hair orange. I guess the next thing I would feel like doing is having it as long as possible. Whatever I've done before, I try not to repeat."

Earlier this year, Mok re-

turned to the big screen. "Stephen Chiu's Chinese New Year movie, KING OF COMEDY, is something new for me again because I'm playing this action queen, a kind of female version of Chow Yun-fat."

Mention of Chow's name makes one wonder if Mok will follow in his footsteps and sample



some American movies. "Given the suitable opportunity," she says, "But I haven't deliberately gone after it..."

"I don't know what people in the West actually look for. I think when they decide to cast someone in TV or in movies, they want someone who's stereotypically and typically Chinese, and they actually want them to speak with a Chinese accent. But, of course, if I had to fake an accent... I think it's only really worth doing if it's a role that could be played by anyone: a white girl, black girl whatever. And if you do something like that, you've made it. But if they're just looking for some Asian face, they have a lot of choices. I don't think I'm in a rush." □

**R**

FULL MOON'S

By JACQUELINE LOVELL

I reunited with Rhonda Griffin at her Santa Monica apartment to chat about what's up with her career and whatever prompted her baptism into this insanity (i.e. showbiz). Born and raised in Richmond, Virginia, a juvenile Griffin had never speculated that acting would eventually pay the bills. Somehow, she didn't notice the signposts up ahead. Example: when his offspring turned only two, Griffin's father turned into a surrogate movie director. "I was always growing up in front of these hot, white lights and was always entertaining and putting on a show" the actress recalls. "I guess my dad prepared me for my future."

As a high school student, she performed in school plays but only for recreational purposes. Packing her bags, an 18-year-old Griffin moved to New York with two rock 'n' roller dudes. "I didn't know what I wanted to do, I just wanted to go on an adventure." She studied fashion design for two years, and by fluke, met an acting teacher in an East Village bar who invited her to attend class. Falling in love with the craft, Griffin promptly abandoned fashion design to nurture her histrionic aptitude. During the next six years, she studied and performed in off-Broadway theater. "I trained with some really wonderful people like Philip Cushee and Wynn Hand-

Griffin, a Full Moon vet, is back on the boards ("I'm writing a one-woman play for years truly"). She's also "popping for the B-Movie Channel. I'll be taking PP behind the scenes."

HONDA GRIFFIN

MAIDEN MOONLIGHTS AS HOSTESS OF CABLE-TV'S B-MOVIE

man, who owns and runs the American Place Theater."

Griffin was cast in a couple of soap operas, *ONE LIFE TO LIVE* and *GUIDING LIGHT*, as a day player. Traversing into another medium, she plunged into independent and student films. Next stop: Los Angeles.

Upon her arrival in Tinseltown, Griffin was tutored by Caryn West and Bobbie Chance ("I like to stretch myself. I like working on characters"). Full Moon, purveyors of horror film franchises, offered the actress a plum role in *HIDEOUS*, a confection about mutants and mayhem. "That was a crazy, fun time and my first break, so to speak," she grins. Matter of fact, I initially became acquainted with Griffin on the film's Romanian locations. We had both been cast in the movie and, upon developing a rapport with her, I started to rhapsodize about Griffin's professionalism and infectious sense of humor. We shared a lot of laughs together! Charlie Band, Full Moon's prez, was so impressed with her performance that he subsequently hired Griffin for *THE CREEPS*. "That film, shot in 3-D, opened outside the Chicago area for Halloween," she recalls. "It ran for three weeks. Everyone got the 3-D glasses and it sold out. It was great fun!" The film is currently on route to the DVD market, replete with 3-D spectacles for purchasers and rentals.

So I get around to addressing her with a question that we all wanna know. "Are you perceived as a sex

"I don't see myself as a sex symbol. I like comedic roles, I'm silly. I'm a nut! As for nudity, I prefer leaving something to the imagination: that's even sexier!"



Griffin has a close encounter with *THE CREEPS*, a "horror comedy" directed by Charles Band. "Great! But it was shot in 3-D & opened for 3 weeks in Chicago."

symbol?" Griffin flashes a smile. "I don't see myself as a sex symbol. It's hard for me to swallow that. I like comedic roles. I'm really silly, I'm a nut! Yes, we can be sexy, that's definitely part of it. But I don't see myself as a sex symbol."

Disarming is part and parcel of breaking into this business, so I pitch the inevitable question, "How do you feel about nudity?" Griffin is hardly nonplussed, and I'm sure this isn't the first time someone dropped this one on her lap. "I love the woman's body," she replies. "There's nothing wrong with [nudity]. But I don't do it. I like leaving it to the imagination. I think

that's even sexier." Her resistance to do nudity called for the hiring of a body double for risque scenes in *HIDEOUS*. Furthermore, certain sequences in *THE CREEPS*—originally conceptualized to be performed sans wardrobe—were cut from the script. "I don't do exploitive movies," reaffirms Griffin. "If I was asked to do a lewd-making scene in a good movie—with a good script—I would do it. Gwyneth Paltrow showed her breasts in *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE* and it was tasteful and appropriate."

Have you ever watched your films? She nods. "Yes, at the screenings. I've watched all my work to

learn. You hate to judge yourself...but you do. You learn from watching." Have you been happy with all your work? "To me, energy is a big part of it. And, sometimes, I realize I could have had more energy in one scene compared to others. When I'm rooted in a character, it's easier to stay in the energy level. When I'm playing myself as a leading lady, I have to trust the energy of me to come out. It's hard to explain." And, as a leading lady, you have to choose which scenes to give different energy to... "Right, and you want to have that range so you can see the stakes and find out what's really important in the scene. I notice a lot of people today, whom I coach, do this X-FILES type of acting, where they're very still and afraid to take those risks and get angry or sad. They're just monotone. And they think this is TV acting and it's not at all!" Excuse me! I didn't know that you coached actors! "I started coaching a couple years ago, when I first got to L.A. I love directing, too! I have a sense for it and the people I've coached get callbacks or book jobs, so they keep coming back to me!"

Griffin's current projects include "a cameo in *DILL SCALLION*, an independent film which Henry Winkler is in. It should be playing at the festivals now." More significantly, she's serving as hostess of a neophyte cable network: "It's called the B-Movie Channel and I'm really, really excited! This could be my little baby, it's [network president] Dennis Morgan's baby, too! We're

continued on page 68



Rhonda Griffen, an iVixie Channel host, will be interviewing cult icons. Her preferred B-film director? "Roger Corman."

RHONDA GRIFFEN

continued from page 10

been very patient and persistent in adhering to his vision, so we're hopefully going to start in the summer." The network's movie library includes over 7,000 titles. Morgan, the brainchild behind the enterprise, is committed to kicking in on a national platform for B-commerce. The programming will cover a global venue of movies produced from the early 1930s through the '90s, in addition to serials, newsreels, animated features, documentaries, student films and even cartoons.

You've just been introduced to Rhonda Griffen via a two-page profile. Consider this only a taste before le grande buffet. Next time around, bring an even healthier appetite: her menu is expanding. □

FATALE ATTRACTIONS

continued from page 7

ship headed for Earth. It was just a small part but I wanted to do something different, be seen in a different light. The problem was that they made the torso of my costume too short so while I was running, the costume ripped right in half across my waist. By the time we got to the last take, it was literally just a bikini! Michaels says she's trying to go "legit," studying the Mims method of acting while focusing on burgeoning careers in journalism, movie makeup, and modeling for fantasy artists. "Every guy with a Camcorder who's making a so-called B-film—they're really just lame imitations of B's—has been contacting me and I'm trying to let more selec-

tive, I'm going in a new direction," says Michaels. "I'm more concerned with unearthing myself in the Mims method now, saving up my money from the fantasy, pin-up modeling and having the financial freedom to be able to say 'No' to those really ridiculously low-budget genre films. I'm trying to show people that I have a brain. But do I really need the Mims technique to play a cheerleader who pops her top and turns into a vampire?"

●Have you tried Sensual Action Adventure yet? Former Elite model Gillian Bonner has created this new interactive game genre for Dragon Productions (www.blackdragon.com). The genre mixes elements of romance, adventure, action and horror into state-of-the-art digital technology that's heavy on the

bump-and-grind. I suggest you sample Dragon's *Rogue Rouge*, an erotic adventure game in which a moony secretary turns sex kitten/action hero. Driven by themes of female empowerment, Rianna visits different worlds, discovering pieces of her nature that make her a whole person: compassion, tolerance, trust, self-esteem and self-control. Along the way, she battles giant spiders, mechanical head hunters and a mysterious figure known as the Evil Stranger. Your reward for solving various logic and time-based puzzles is erotic, explicit man/woman and woman/woman sex. According to Dragon's promo description, "Sex is a point of feminine power, pleasure and independent decision, with positive and negative consequences." And speaking of consequences, fail to solve a puzzle and you could find yourself strangled, electrocuted, dismembered, disemboweled, decapitated, amputated, or otherwise incapacitated! Enjoy! □

CRUSADE

continued from page 4

with it—then something may happen with CRUSADE in the future," says Copeland. "Obviously, ratings are the key to the success of any show. For any interest to be reactivated, by any potential buyer, there has to be an audience there."

With so many channels accessible on the television dial, viewers' attention spans have decreased: hence, ratings have proportionately fragmented. Today, if SLIDERS gets a 1.0 rating for the Sci-Fi Channel, it's considered a big success. This means that even with a small audience, TNT may reconsider their cancellation if the numbers are sufficiently compelling. What's encouraging is that A CALL FOR ARMS, the latest B5 movie that served as a lead-in for CRUSADE, garnered very good ratings in its January '99 premiere.

"The best thing for everyone to do is tune in and watch the show, and make sure the ratings are good. That's the watershed mark," says Copeland. "A letterwriting campaign may give folks some satisfaction that they're doing something. But I don't think that's going to have any effect at this point in time [March, '99]. When the show gets on the air, it may be a different story." □

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DIANA DOES

The *FF* article on Diana Dore (7/11), while interesting and welcome, curiously failed to mention two of her most famous roles. She was in one of several TV adaptations of Richard Crompton's *Just William* books, the definitive series of naughty schoolboy stories in English literature. Dore was also in the late 1970s version, playing Mrs. Bott, mother of William's nemesis, Violet Elizabeth Bott (who was played by a very young Bonnie Langford [DR. WHO]).

Dore was also in a science fiction serial called *The Worm That Turned* which was shown (late '70s or early '80s) as part of a long-running (30 years!) comedy show called *THE TWO RONNIES* (each season of which had a serial split into five-minute chapters). *The Worm That Turned* was set in a future England where sex roles have been reversed, so men have to wear dresses and stay at home doing the housework. Dore was leader of the quasi-SS, all-female security force attempting to stamp out male resistance groups who would gather in secret to smoke pipes and talk about soccer. Of course, all the regular security officers were busy young women in short, tight uniforms. The narrative always said, "They carried all before them—and quite a lot behind!"

THE TWO RONNIES was not known for being politically correct!

M.J. Simpson (England)
msimpson@btinternet.com

ROXY'S MOXY

There's plenty of beautiful women in this wonderful world, but how many could match-up to the wit and wisdom of Roxanne Michaels (11/13)? Yes, she's gorgeous but what captivated me in her obvious intelligence and passion for science fiction. I hate to be snobbish but, in my opinion, the genre shouldn't be treated as a recreational "fanboy" arena but as a forum for the future. I truly hope that Ms Michaels will explore its multi-media components in future issues of *FF*.

Bill Carlin
Boston Reagin, LA

Thank you, Roxanne Michaels, for verbally stating everything that, until recently, I have been prohibited from communicating. I had to stick to provincial rules or risk ostracism or even worse. But, in science fiction, there are no rules. To paraphrase Ray Bradbury, you create your own world ("I can be in Mars tonight if I want to," he told me), and it's a perfect environment for lesbians.

Sad, but the Hollywood rule is that every time someone makes even a flimsy about an all-female colonization of a planet (e.g. *QUEEN OF OUTER SPACE*) or a tropical isle (*DINOSAUR ISLAND*), it's somehow perceived as a lesbian, despotic den of iniquity; hence, a couple of jocks inevitably crash-land to subvert the queen and "purify" the lifestyle. Only one film began and ended with the all-female populace governed as a matriarchy—and that was *ABBOTT & COSTELLO GO TO MARS*.

Finally, with Hollywood trendily riding the costume of *SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE*, I suggest another viewing of *FORBIDDEN PLANET*: it's much more palatable than all of the traditional *Midsummer Night's Dream* precursors (including the claying 1935 "classic").

God Bless, Ray...

Jennifer Tyler
Fontana, WI

FEMMES FATALES

I'm an avid fan of your mag and absolutely love it. A few months ago, you ran articles on Alisa Shtitsky's sexy sci-fi series, including *THE CLACK*, *BUTTERSCOTCH* (both 6/9) and *THE SEX FILES* (7/12). I know they've been released, but have been unable to find them (I live in the middle of the Bible Belt). Do you have any information related to their cable-TV or video debut? I was also wondering what's next in the cards for Darcy DeMoss (5/6) and Rochelle Swanson (3/8). J

Repect316@aol.com



Readers raved: Rochelle Swanson, whose *FF* profile (7/12) drew a huge response. Active in multiple projects, she's shooting an *FF* film.

[A package deal for *BUTTERSCOTCH* and *THE CLACK* is still in negotiations, but a cable broadcast of *THE SEX FILES* is imminent (a second season is already in production). We'll keep you posted. Ms. DeMoss has been very busy co-producing *BRADLY ILLUSION*, touring Australia for a gig as *FLIPPER 3*, launching her own franchise called *Hagbag* and announcing her engagement to a very lucky suitor. According to writer/producer Art Barr, the sumptuous Ms. Swanson (*HARD COUNTRY*, *SORCERESS*) "is likely to be somewhere cooking-up that secret chili recipe that I gave her."

Loved *FF* 7-13 The opening shot (page 7) of vampy Denise Duff in the buff (as "Eve") is absolutely nuclear. Which is not has been reserved as her cover story? Alan Jones' interview with Alan Argento was wonderful, and I agree 200% with the editorial (i.e. Asia "is serious therapy for a very anxious horror cinema"). The centerfold, Rachel Robbins, is much like Argento: beautiful, young and driven. What are Robbins' latest projects?

Jason Angelo
Morton, PA

[Denise Duff's spicy spread,

printed in *FF* 8.2, will be an *newsstands* no later than late June. Duff, incidentally, has recently been cast in a TV pilot. Is additional to appearing in a musical video for *Ben Folds Five*, Rachel Robbins is starring as "Vortex"—a supermodel who transforms into a superheroine—as *PSIPHUM*. She also landed a supporting role in "a wonderful comedy" titled *THE LAST LADY'S MAN*. And, yes, she'll be back as a forthcoming issue.]

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